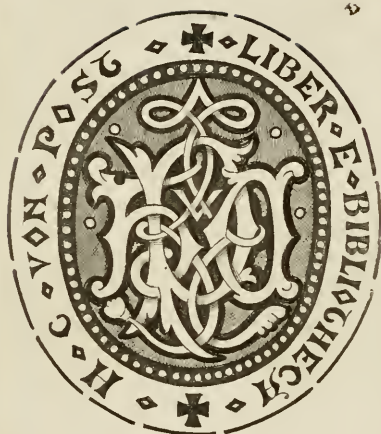


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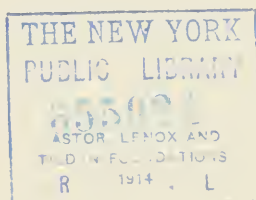
BY

STEPHEN H. TYNG, D.D.
RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,
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INTRODUCTION.

THE great kindness with which his former publications have been received in the Christian community, has emboldened the Author to offer also the present work to their acceptance. His object in it is a very distinct one. How far it has been successfully accomplished, he does not presume to judge. His purpose and wish are, to display the spiritual safety of man, as found solely in his personal union, by a living faith, to Christ;—a faith which is of the operation of God; the work of the Holy Ghost within the heart. He believes that there is a very extending tendency and disposition displayed in the current writings upon the subjects of spiritual instruction, to exalt that which is outward and visible in religious profession, above that which is inward and spiritual in religious experience. It is a tendency which goes far towards making the real work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, appear fanatical and contemptible, while it elevates the means and

agencies which are in the hands of man, into an undue place of honour and regard. It almost completely substitutes the outward church for Christ himself; and the form of godliness for its power. It is often united with a mysticism of expression, which wears a false appearance of depth of thought; and a serious earnestness of statement, which would claim the aspect of a real reverence for truth. Against this whole system of ecclesiastical exaltation, the author of this work feels a deep repugnance, as being unscriptural in its character, and destructive of true spiritual piety in its operation. Without a direct or avowed conflict with the principles of this system of error, as he esteems it, he has attempted in these pages, to state, to the best of his ability, the opposite principles of Gospel truth. He has avoided all attempts at fine speech, or newly-invented terms, upon this great subject, and has endeavoured to state his views of truth, in the simplest and most intelligible manner. His single object, is really to exalt and honour the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be the instrument of gathering the souls of others unto him. If the Gracious Saviour shall please so to employ and bless his labours, the whole purpose of his efforts will be accomplished. He has no wish to deprecate criticism, if his work is considered worthy even of so

much notice; for he believes the principles here taught, to be the principles of eternal and unchangeable truth. They are the Gospel, for which he must contend, and which it is impossible for him to yield. Living or dying, all his hope and all his desire are indissolubly bound to the great and precious truths which are here proclaimed. May God the Spirit, lead his readers to accept and rejoice in the same truths; by giving them a living, spiritual union with the Glorious Saviour of sinners!—May they find HIM to be in life, or in death, their everlasting portion! And in a blessed and blissful eternity, may it be their privilege to exclaim, from the consciousness of an unalterable possession of this Mighty Redeemer, as their own Lord, “CHRIST IS ALL.”

S. H. T.

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH,
New York, November 1, 1848.



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CHRIST IS ALL.

COLOSSIANS, iii. 11.

CHAPTER I.

THE spiritual character and the eternal interests of man are both wholly dependant upon his personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ, the appointed Saviour of mankind. The proposition of the text refers to this spiritual salvation of man; and it must be received as entirely unlimited in its affirmation. In reference to this whole work of grace for the soul of man, "Christ is all." The sinner's deliverance from the penalty and the power of sin, and his reinstatement in the family and the favour of God, are accomplished for him, exclusively by the Saviour himself. In the great undertaking of redeeming mercy, which was to give the victory to man, His arm brought salvation to him. In the atoning sufferings which were to be endured for man, He trod the wine-press alone. The righteousness which was to be finished for man's justification, He hath perfected and brought in for divine acceptance in man's behalf. By one offering of Himself, once offered, He hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified. All fulness dwells in him. Exceeding riches of grace are laid up in him. And from his fulness

we receive grace for grace. The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all that believe. There is no difference. Men are justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; and being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. In this respect, referring to man's acceptance with God, "Christ is all." He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

But the apostle makes the affirmation also, in reference to the inward work of man's sanctification. In the putting on of that new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him,—that setting of man's affections on things above, and mortifying his members which are upon the earth,—which distinguish those who are risen with Christ, "Christ is all." By his Spirit, in obedience to his will, and after the pattern of his holiness, this work of new creation is carried on and completed; so that man becomes a new man, renewed in holiness, because by the ingrafting power of the Holy Spirit, he is in Christ, and has put on Christ. Christ is of God, made unto man, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; so that he that glorieth, must glory wholly and only in the Lord. The great question therefore which is to be settled in regard to every man, as deciding the whole condition of his soul, is the relation in which he stands to the Lord Jesus Christ. In this great and all important concern, "Christ is all."

In displaying this personal relation of man to the Son of God, the Holy Scriptures exhibit his condition as threefold. Every descendant of man, is either "*in Christ*," or "*with Christ*," or "*without Christ*." These three descriptions include the whole race, and in reference to each, "Christ is all." To be *in Christ*, is to be in a state of grace and spiritual security on earth, in preparation for a future state of blessedness and glory. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away: behold all things are become new." To be *with Christ*, is to be in a final state of exaltation and bliss. "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." To be *without Christ*, is to be in a condition of entire spiritual destitution, guilt, and misery. "At that time, ye were without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world." The state of every man living, whether in the present, or in the unseen world, is described, by one or the other, of these three expressions. No child of Adam can be found, who is not either in a state of unpardoned guilt, and thus without Christ; or pardoned, and in a state of acceptance with God, and thus in Christ; or in a state of eternal blessedness and reward, and thus with Christ. And in each of these conditions, every thing connected with the state and prospects of the soul, depends upon this one fact. "Christ is all." The whole misery of the guilty man, in time and in eternity, arises from his being without Christ. The whole security and comfort of the pardoned man, springs from his being in Christ. The whole blessedness of the glorified

man, is comprised in the one fact, that he is with Christ.

The Lord Jesus Christ is himself the fountain of all blessings to the soul of man. Union with him, partnership in his possessions, whether in the present state of grace, or in the future, final state of glory, is the secure possession of every thing, which can be to the soul of man, at all desirable. Man can ask nothing more, to enrich him with all conceivable blessings, than to have a real fellowship, and connection, with the Saviour of mankind; and that fellowship made permanent and everlasting. Such a fellowship must open to his endless enjoyment, rivers of pleasure, of the purest and the most satisfying character. If he is one with Christ, all things adapted to promote his joy, or to enlarge his glory, become his forever. He is enriched with all spiritual blessings in Christ, and all things are his,—whether things present, or things to come,—because he is Christ's, and Christ is his. For the same reason, separation from Christ, is the necessary loss of every thing which the soul of man can desire. There can be no peace to man in this condition, whatever other circumstances of outward advantage he may possess,—because Christ alone is our peace, and alone is able to speak peace, whether to him that is far off, or to him that is nigh. Man has nothing more to dread, and if his eyes were open to the truth, he would dread nothing more, than to be thus cut off from the only Redeemer of the guilty soul,—shut out from his favour, and obliged to spend his present time, and his future eternity, without a participa-

tion in the mercies which this gracious Redeemer alone bestows. The presence of the Saviour makes a heaven of blessedness for the redeemed; comforting them in every possible trial of an earthly state; and establishing them in the inconceivable, and unchangeable glories of an everlasting world. Banishment from the Saviour, leaving the guilty forever under the burden and power of their own iniquities, is a punishment in itself, greater than a sinful creature can bear. When he says, therefore, "Depart from *me*, ye cursed," it is a sentence overwhelming in itself, in the relation in which man stands to him, the only source of light and life to the soul,—even though he had not added, "into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

This threefold condition of man in his relation to the Saviour, I purpose, with the Lord's blessing, to consider in the following pages. I would exhibit, the state of man by nature,—the state of man in grace,—and the state of man in glory. My object is to consider him, in each of these conditions, in his relation to the Saviour of mankind; and to display, in various aspects, and illustrations, the all-important fact, that in the vast concerns of man's redemption, "Christ is all;"—has accomplished all the work,—bestows all the benefits,—and is entitled to all the glory.

To the man *in Christ*, "Christ is all." He is personally the source and fountain of all the blessings which such a man enjoys; and is himself the greatest and most precious of all gifts,—the unspeakable gift of God to him. The complete redemption of man, in all the particular acts and

works of mercy which constitute it, is to be found in Christ. And whether you view the whole as one divine work, or pass into an examination of each of the particulars which is comprised within it, the assertion remains unchanged. "Christ is all." The pardon of his sin is in Christ. His iniquities have been laid upon the Saviour, who has become a ransom in his stead,—and as was figured in the ceremony of the scape-goat,—he has taken them completely away, and made an end of sin for him, in its condemnation and its penalty, by enduring that condemnation in his own body, once for all. There is therefore now, no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus. God sees not iniquity in them, but has blotted out, as a thick cloud, all their transgressions.

The justification of his soul is in Christ. It was the perfect obedience of this one Saviour, which magnified the law, and made it honorable. His obedience was a righteousness, spotless and everlasting. With this, imputed to his servants, he has covered them as with a robe. For this obedience, he was justified; and declared to be justified, in his resurrection from the dead;—for death, in consequence of it, could have no dominion over him. By this obedience, they also are justified, partakers of his justification, receiving the righteousness of God, by faith. And having thus passed from death unto life, in the entire and everlasting reversal of the sentence of God concerning them, they receive that crown of this perfect righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge, shall give them in the last day. The conversion and

regeneration of the man in Christ, is also in Christ. It is by the power of the Spirit of Christ,—and through the operation of the truth of Christ,—and by the influence of the love of Christ,—that he has been brought from Satan unto God. The Holy Spirit dwelling within him, brings him unto Jesus, for every grace,—and shows him, that He is the light and the salvation of his soul. His progress in grace, is all in Christ;—he lives in Christ,—and walks in Christ,—and is growing up into Him who is the head, by the power of His Spirit which dwells within him. If he looks for the source of his gifts, he finds it in Christ. If he considers the origin of his hopes, this also is in Christ. If he contemplates his path of duty, or his personal responsibility;—the work which he must do,—or the strength by which he must do it,—or the authority under which it must be done,—or the account which he must give for it, when it is done,—“Christ is all.” He returns from every meditation upon his personal condition, in all its aspects, whether of the joys which he receives,—or the consolations which attend his trials,—or the trials which are made the means of consolations,—or the sorrow which he feels for sin,—or the forgiveness which comforts him in his sorrow,—or his hope of acceptance at a Father’s throne,—or his prospect of perseverance in the path of earthly duty,—or his desire for the spirit of adoption, to make that path peaceful and happy,—or his inheritance in the kingdom of his Father;—he returns from every meditation upon each of these subjects of most serious and absorbing thought, to say,—“Christ is all.” He

becomes more simply determined, to know nothing else, in his soul's relations, and more involuntarily convinced, that there is nothing else to know. And however self-righteousness may reject, or unbelief may despise, this Glorious Redeemer; his simple faith lays hold upon Him, in the exclamation, "This is all my salvation and all my desire:"—"Here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein; and this shall be my heritage forever, for it is the very joy of my heart."

To the man *with Christ*, "Christ is all." It is His gracious presence, which makes an abode of peace, and a recompense of reward, for His people. His promise was, that they should be with Him, and behold His glory. He went before them, as a forerunner, to prepare a place for them,—that where He was, they might also be. And however partial, and general in other respects, are the revelations of this future state of glory, they are all combined in this one fact, most clearly displayed, the presence of Christ,—and they are made dependant upon this. The living, inward principle, of true religion upon earth, is an abiding, conscious love for Christ,—exciting the soul to desire,—and enabling it to prepare for, the personal presence of the Being, thus truly and ardently loved. And in every anticipation of a coming glory, to a really spiritual mind,—the expression of its feeling towards a beloved Redeemer is, "Whom have I in heaven, but Thee? and there is none upon the earth, that I desire in comparison with Thee." In the present joys of a state of salvation, "Christ is all." These depend not upon the outward circum-

stances of advantage or disadvantage, in which a man is placed, but upon the conscious enjoyment of the presence of a Saviour with the soul; and a clear and reasonable assurance of a personal interest in Him. They are often higher and purer, when man is destitute of all outward ministrations, and is compelled, by the Providence which guides him, to go up from the wilderness of life, leaning upon this beloved Lord alone. The peace of God, which passeth understanding, keeps the hearts and minds of the people of God, through Christ Jesus alone. It depends upon the degree of simplicity and affection with which *He* is confided in, and embraced; and is as sure and abiding to the truly believing soul, in the seclusion of the chamber of sickness, or in the dungeon of confinement, as amidst any or all of the outward ministrations and means of the earthly sanctuary. The more completely Christ becomes all to the soul, the more certain and elevated its joys become. And on the other hand, the nearer a soul approaches in character, and in enjoyment, to the blessedness and glory of a state of heavenly reward,—the more simply and entirely it finds its all, of provision, and joy, and hope, laid up in Christ. With this divinely imparted spirit, it is prepared for glory, and rendered meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. In the possession and exercise of this spirit, it enters into life. And it is this habit and state of mind and affection, which places the soul perfectly and at once, at home where to every redeemed being, “Christ is all,” and the fulness of the Di-

vine glory shines forth for all in the face of Jesus Christ. If you could conceive, that the Saviour should be separated or absent, from such an expected and offered reward ;—that the redeemed man, who has lived upon the earth, only as he lived in Christ, and stood fast in the Lord ; who was taught by the Holy Spirit, to grow up into Christ in all things ; who has been happy only in the anticipation of a Saviour's presence ; and would have been wretched, could he have been deprived of this anticipation ;—should find no Saviour there,—should search in vain for the Lord whom he loved ;—there would be no heaven for him. Every hope which he had cherished would expire in disappointment ; and in perfect emptiness of spirit, would he ask, “Tell me, where is He, whom my soul loveth.” Crowds of angelic beings would be nothing to him. All the beautiful illustrations which the sacred Scriptures contain, made actual realities, would not satisfy a single want. To his soul,—fed with hope of the presence of Christ, and accustomed to look forward with joy unspeakable, to the hour when he should be like Him, and see Him as he is,—the universe would be emptiness, if He were not there. This divine presence gives attraction and charm to every other provision, which grace has made for him, in the riches of glory ; and is itself, the chief attraction and glory of the state, which thus derives every thing from it. For what is heaven, but a complete elevation and establishment of pure religion to the soul ? Whence can such joy ever arise, but from the love of Christ ?

In the joys of anticipation here, to the spiritual mind, "Christ is all." In the future state, anticipation has become possession; and to the man with Christ, it is this possession which constitutes his bliss. There, "Christ is all." And all joys abound upon him, because he is with Christ.

To the man *without Christ*, "Christ is all." Not in the possession of such a Saviour,—because he is without Christ. But in his actual state of need, and guilt, and sorrow, all his wants are comprised in this one fact of destitution, that he has no Saviour. The difficulties which press him, arise from this one want. Could this want be supplied, every grief would be banished, and every danger would be removed forever. And whether you view him, in his condition on earth, or in a future state of recompense, this fact is unchanged;—could you bring him to Christ, and unite him in love and faith to Him, at any period of his progress, you would change all his mourning into joy, and wipe away all tears from his eyes. In the present earthly condition of the man without Christ, a change of this one fact would make an entire change in all the facts which constitute or affect his state. The works impossible for him to perform, and which must notwithstanding be finished, would be found completed in a Saviour. The dangers from which he can never escape in any strength or wisdom of his own, would be found removed forever by the divine power of his Lord. The sorrows which now crush him with their burden, and which can only increase as time passes away, would find an adequate and perfect consolation in Jesus. The sinner would become a new

man in all his relations, and find nothing left for him to desire, but a constant increase in the knowledge and love of this glorious and accepted Redeemer. Every longing of his soul would be satisfied, when blessed with this full salvation. The reality of this statement has been already proved, in all the millions of instances, in which men have been brought from the darkness of their guilt to the marvellous light of the Gospel. Herein they do rejoice,—yea, and will rejoice, receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. They are filled with all hope, and joy, and peace in believing, because they are no longer strangers and foreigners,—aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and without God in the world,—but have put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and have access unto the Father, through Him, by the Holy Ghost. Could the same mighty Saviour be offered and accepted in hell, there would be hell no more. Redemption offered and accepted through the blood of Jesus, would transform all the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction into vessels of mercy, meet for the Master's use;—would change the groans of bitterness into songs of praise;—would bring deliverance to the captive, and let the oppressed go free. It is the eternal impossibility of this,—the everlasting absence of a Saviour,—the fearful fact, that no anointed Redeemer can ever go into that world to save sinners,—which constitutes the gloom and wretchedness of that abode of despair, and shuts out every ray of hope, and light, from the souls who are condemned to be without Christ forever. Because they have rejected Him, He hath also

rejected them. He will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh. They may call upon Him, but He will not answer. They may seek Him early, but they shall not find Him. Yet though this transformation of their condition is impossible, the fact remains the same, that "Christ is all" for them. Their wants are all comprised in that which He has done. Their sorrows all arise from their despising and rejecting of this one provided Saviour. They are miserable forever, because they are forever without Christ. Their wretchedness in this condition is extreme, and cannot be alleviated;—because the Lord whom they have rejected, visits them no more, and there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries of God. Whether, therefore, the man without Christ be in a state of probation, or in a state of recompense, "Christ is all" to him,—he needs nothing else. Could he gain an interest and portion in Him, he would have every thing laid up in Him, and all things would become his, because he is Christ's.

The importance of the truth which has been here laid open, cannot be magnified. Every thing for you depends upon this one fact. The importance of a distinct statement of such truth to you, is equally great. Unfaithfulness in ministration on this point is ruin to the souls of men. The ministers of the Gospel are sent to teach and to preach the Lord Jesus Christ, and to persuade men not to receive the grace of God in vain. The weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God, to the pulling

down of strongholds, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. The instrument of their influence and power, is not an official authority residing in them, but the preaching of the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven. The method by which you become partakers of the blessing, is not by any incorporation in outward ordinances or services, but by an acceptance of the truth in your hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given unto you. And as freely as Christ is offered to you,—to be all your salvation,—so freely is He to be accepted by you, as having every thing laid up in himself for you. We do not labour, therefore, to lead you to a mere external union with an earthly church, but to bring you to a spiritual, inward fellowship with Christ,—a fellowship which you will attain and enjoy, when it is given you on behalf of God, by His Holy Spirit, to believe on His name. We urge you therefore to receive Christ Jesus the Lord; to be rooted and built up in him; to renounce all works of your own, that you may find your righteousness in him. We urge you to count every thing but loss for Christ's sake; to lose your own life,—all confidence in any inward power of your own to live,—for Him, that you may find in Him a life eternal,—a life hidden with Him in God; that when He shall appear, you may also appear with Him in glory. O! it is this coming to Christ, in the conscious emptiness of a craving nature,—this hungering and thirsting after Him; this feeding upon Him in the soul, eating and drinking Him in the delighted resting of the spirit upon Him; making Him alone your life and your sal-

vation; seeking every thing in Him, contented that every thing for you, should dwell in Him forever;—it is this transferring of the soul, in all its hopes, and fears, and aims, and doubts, and works, and responsibilities, completely to Him,—this taking of Him in exchange for the soul, this embracing of Him in the work which he has finished, and the work which he only is able to finish; this simple, determined abiding at his feet, in confidence amidst all doubts, in affectionate trust amidst all fears, with entwining adherence amidst all temptations;—it is this, which gives life to the soul, and then preserves it, in the life which it has imparted. It is this which removes all dangers, settles all difficulties, bestows all gifts, and establishes the soul in grace, and keeps it by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. Hither, then, let sinners gather with unfeigned repentance. Here let saints abide in living faith. All shall be one in Christ Jesus; and every handwriting which is against you, and contrary to you, shall be blotted out, and taken away, and nailed forever to his cross, by this one almighty, all-sufficient, Saviour of guilty, perishing man.

IN CHRIST.

I KNEW A MAN IN CHRIST.—2 CORINTHIANS, xii. 2.

CHAPTER II.

RETROSPECTION.

I HAVE selected this simple statement of the Apostle, because it precisely affirms the one great fact of man's condition, which I desire now to present to the consideration of my readers. "IN CHRIST." It is a state of hope, of grace, and of acceptance with God. It is the condition of those who have been begotten again by the power of the Holy Ghost, to the enjoyment of a lively hope, through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead. Several different aspects of this spiritual condition I desire, by the Divine blessing, to present to your notice. They will be all designed to bear upon the one great point of our previous consideration, "Christ is all." The Apostle says, "I knew a man in Christ." Let us adopt his expression, and consider some of the facts which distinguish such a man, from other men who are "without Christ." Of this peculiar condition of man, what have we known?

The title CHRIST points out the official character of the glorious Son of God, as the *anointed*

Saviour of mankind. To be *in Christ* is therefore readily understood to mean, to be a partaker of the benefits of those gracious offices which the Son of God has been anointed to fulfil; to have embraced the blessed Gospel which this Saviour has proclaimed, and the religion which He has established among men, in sincere faith and love; to have been made personally one with Him, by his Holy Spirit living and dwelling in the soul, and forming Him there, as the hope of glory; to be a Christian not only in outward profession, by union with the ordinances of the visible church, but in heart and character also, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The expression indicates a completely new condition of being in relation to his Divine Redeemer and Lord, to which a man has been brought by the power of God; a condition which is filled with varied retrospections, and prospects and experiences, both of joys and griefs, entirely peculiar to itself. The statement of this new condition immediately calls to mind, a period of life, at which the man was brought to this new state; and the power, and the means, by which he was led from being "without Christ," his natural condition of want and danger, to be "in Christ," his present state of security and peace.

He was inwardly convinced of sin by the Holy Ghost, because he believed not in Christ. By the same Spirit, he was led in godly sorrow for sin, to seek the Saviour whom he had before rejected, that he might win Him, and be found in Him. This Saviour, offered to him, and found

by him, in the open revelation of His Gospel, he received as his own Redeemer with gratitude and joy. He embraced the message which presented him, with sincere faith, as a personal message from God. He was thus justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which was provided in Jesus Christ the Lord. He was thus engrafted by the Holy Spirit into Christ, and made one body with Him. And now in regard to his relation to God, and to his standing before God, he is "in Christ;" known and received, as a member of Christ; and made an eternal partaker of all His glory and triumph. Of such an one, the Apostle says, "I knew a man in Christ,"—a man who was accepted before God, in Christ as his perfect righteousness, and was made a partaker of the Divine nature, in Christ as his entire sanctification. Of some of the attributes and characteristics of such a man, I wish to speak.

I knew him, *standing at a point for most important and useful retrospection*. I knew him, in a situation, in the experience, and the interests of his spiritual being, from which, he might look back, with great profit and advantage, upon the different events and characteristics of his past life.

The powers of memory and reflection have been given to man, that he may acquire and employ for his future benefit the full advantage of his own experience in life that is past. True wisdom will lead him often to sit down, and recall to mind, events through which he has passed; difficulties which he has been enabled

to overcome ; and trials of character and feeling which he has been required to endure. Even in the limited and transitory concerns of his present life, he finds it useful and necessary, to permit the errors of former days to teach him a wiser system of labour and improvement for the time to come ; and thus to gain valuable instruction, even from the follies which memory recounts. The man who is in Christ, renewed in the spirit of his mind, and sustaining an entirely new relation towards God, from his connection with his Gracious Saviour, looks back from his present condition of happiness and safety, both upon the old things, which have passed away ; and upon the beginnings of the things which have been made new. Some few facts, which are contained in this useful retrospection, first of the old things which have passed away, it will be profitable for us to consider.

From his present position of gracious acceptance with God, he looks back upon *his former hardness of heart, under the dispensations of divine mercy*, with amazement. The heavenly messages of the Gospel, which now so deeply affect his soul, and call into exercise the most tender and anxious feelings of his nature, in his former condition, produced upon him no softening impression. The contrast between his present and his former state of mind, in regard to the power and influence of the divine word upon him, fills him with astonishment. Then, the terrors of God did not persuade him, whether they spake in the awakening dealings of a Divine Providence, or in the solemn threatenings to the ungodly, of a judgment to

come. The fidelity of Christian ministers often seemed to him, the mere cant of their profession. The solemnity and earnestness of their appeals to his conscience, he considered a mere artifice for influence and effect. The wonderful love of Christ for a lost world, did not attract or move him. The affectionate entreaties of the Gospel, so exciting, now that their need is felt, then passed upon his ear without a trace behind. The frequent repetition of the Saviour's name, in the ministration of his word, now to him like the sweetest fragrance poured out, was tedious and annoying. The daily long-suffering of God, now so manifest, and so arresting to his attention, was then unnoticed, and produced in him no repentance. He thought not of God, nor of any of His marvellous works. The word of God, now so filled to his mind, with the riches of wisdom and knowledge, opening to him views of truth, so exhilarating and so delightful, conveyed no salutary teachings to him then. The letter was sometimes read, but its spirit was unfelt and unnoticed. In his present condition, when the whole effect of God's gracious dispensations upon his mind and heart, is so different, he cannot but be amazed at his former carelessness and inattention. He finds it difficult to account for a state of affection and character, which was so unsuited to his necessary dependance upon God, and so unworthy of his ability to enjoy and honour him. He is sometimes ready to imagine, that the Saviour could not have spoken to him then, as he does now.* He is now surprised to observe in others, under faithful exhibitions of the truth, which arrest every thought,

and awaken every energy of his own mind,—the same total unconcern which once marked himself. He looks back upon this native hardness of heart towards God, in himself, with unqualified amazement and distress. But it is one of the old things which have passed away. And grieved as he is, in contemplating it, he is able to say, “Such indeed was I; but I have been washed from this guilt in the blood of Christ my Lord; and by the Spirit of God, have been brought from this state of darkness and hardness of heart, to the marvellous light and love which shine forth in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

He looks back *upon his former devotion to this perishing world* with shame. He has now been taught to make the Apostle’s comparison, between the things which are seen, and are temporal, and the things which are unseen, and are eternal; and he reckons with him, that the one are not worthy to be compared with the other. As the practical result of this contrast, he forgets the things which are behind, as objects of his desire and pursuit, and reaching after the things before, presses forward, that he may lay hold on eternal life. But from this, his present state of mind, he looks back upon one which was very different from it. There was a time, when the pleasures of the world attracted him, and he loved them. The seductive scenes of giddiness and mirth invited his affections, and he yielded to their influence. It formed, then, no part of his plan to ask counsel of God. It was no repelling fact to him, that the curse rather than the blessing of God rested upon any recreation or employment to

which he was called. But now, he calls to mind, with shame and pity for himself, the low and grovelling spirit which made his immortal powers stoop to such pursuits. He feels the solemn truth of the divine assertion, "He that liveth in pleasure, is dead while he liveth." The emoluments of the world then seemed to him also, of vast importance and worth. He thought not of the inevitable end of such things, or of the danger that they might be pursued to the everlasting ruin of the soul. His time and powers were unreservedly devoted to their acquisition. Even the fearful question of the Saviour, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" never caused him to hesitate in this vain pursuit. And yet, while he loved the pleasures, and eagerly sought the gains of the world, its cares and losses, the suspense which it required in getting, the uncertainty which attended its possession, and the remorse which it occasioned after enjoyment, constantly agitated and harassed him, and more than counterbalanced, all the gains the world could give. Now, when he looks back, from his present high, honourable, and happy station, as a redeemed man, a man renewed and justified in Christ, he sees the exceeding folly of this whole system of life. He is ashamed to think he could ever have been such a slave, to that which he knew, must eventually leave him to perish; that he could have so long willingly sacrificed all the blessings and hopes which were offered him in Christ, for the mere transitory pampering of a subject of condemnation and death. Bunyan's description of the man with

the muck rake, in the Pilgrim's Progress, shows him the very sottishness and degradation, which he now sees to have marked himself. And he is conscious of a deep sense of shame, as he recurs to the time which he passed, in his former lusts, in ignorance of God, and in contempt for the noble objects which God presented. But this also is one of the old things which have passed away. The love which he once gave to the world, and the things of the world, he now gratefully devotes to God his Saviour, and to the glories of his inheritance, and the pleasures of his service.

He looks back *upon his former opposition to God* with unfeigned sorrow. He sees that he was a fighter against God, in all the conduct and purposes of his former life. When the Lord graciously called him, he refused to hear. Nor was he ever obedient to his voice. There could have been no addition, it seems to him, to the variety of the methods, or to the tenderness of the expedients, by which God attempted to gain his affections, and win his heart to his own service and favour. And yet they were all unsuccessful. Nothing could induce him to submit himself to the will of God. The chastisements of a Divine Providence produced no good effect upon him. He resisted the kind and salutary operation of them all. The affectionate admonitions of the Holy Spirit, that would so often have led him back to holiness and God, were rejected and expelled. While God was employing every instrument, and applying every influence, to raise his darkened spirit from the earth, and to inspire him with a wish to feed on angels' food, he was

turning the whole bent of his affections and mind, to an aversion as wide as possible from him. He was always resisting the Holy Ghost ; and pursued his chosen course of sin, in defiance of every effort that could be made for his recovery and salvation. Now, he sees the inestimable worth of all God's operations of love for him, and he feels a deep sorrow, in the recollection that he neglected them so long ;—that their beneficial influence was wholly cast away, through so large a portion of the time which was given him as a preparation for a happy eternity. He mourns that he did not commence the work of his salvation, with the commencement of his reasoning powers. He grieves to see, that his childhood and youth, and perhaps a large part of his maturity also, were wasted and thrown away, in the pursuit of idle vanities, while no provision was laid up for a future rest. He deeply regrets that he should have so spurned the grace of God, so mocked his law, so disregarded his loving-kindness, and thus counted himself unworthy of eternal life. These are sources of deep sorrow, in every retrospection of his life. But these tears are precious, and this is a sorrow which is permanently useful. It leads him to be far more jealous of the rising again of this spirit of opposition to God ; to be vigilant in submitting himself to the divine will ; and to be earnest and diligent, in making full improvement of the opportunities and privileges, which are still remaining for his enjoyment.

He looks back *upon his former condemnation in sin* with awe and terror. He sees the rock whence he was hewn, and the hole of the pit

whence he was digged. He feels a deep solemnity pervading his spirit, as he reverts to the dangers, from which Almighty grace has rescued him. Like a man who has escaped from a shipwreck, and stands upon the shore, to look upon the angry waters, from which the hand of God has plucked him, pitying and praying for, those who are still struggling in the billows; so the Christian meditates upon the fearful dangers of his soul, when he was at enmity with God, and lying under his righteous indignation, for his unbelief. He sees now, that God would have been holy and just in his everlasting condemnation. He sees that he long stood ignorantly and blindly, upon the very brink of eternal perdition, provoking the justice of God to punish his transgressions; and defying Him by continued rebellions to fulfil the threatenings which he had made. He now sees, that his unjustified and sinful soul lay under the sentence of eternal death; and that nothing but the despised long-suffering of God kept back that sentence, from its full and final execution. Boundless compassion alone held him up from going down into the pit. Hell had enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure, to receive him in all the pomp and glory of his sin. Satan was saying in malicious triumph, "There, there, so would I have it;"—when the despised love of a Saviour snatched him from ruin,—rolled away the curse from his soul,—rescued him from the condemnation which he had brought upon himself,—converted him by His own Holy Spirit,

and bound him as a living sacrifice to himself forever.

Through the exceeding riches of divine grace, he is now in Christ, accepted and forgiven. He has been reconciled unto God, by the Saviour's one offering for sin. And he looks back upon the blackness of this cloud of indignation which has passed over him, with unfeigned gratitude, but with the deepest awe. He ascribes it singly to the great love wherewith God has loved him when he was dead in sins, that this condemnation has passed away, and that he is no longer a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. He gives unceasing glory to God, who, when he was far off, made him nigh by the blood of Christ. And he looks with sorrow and pity, upon the condition of those who are still wandering in the blindness of their minds, without Christ, having no hope, and without God in the world.

This is a part of the retrospection which distinguishes the man in Christ. These are some views of the old things which are passed away. Now, in these respects, all things have become new. His heart is not hardened against the truth,—his affections are not devoted to the world,—his spirit is not arrayed in opposition to God,—his soul is no longer under the condemnation of death. He is a new man in Christ Jesus. Such indeed was he; but he has obtained mercy from a pardoning God. He has passed from death unto life. He is renewed in the spirit of his mind. He has been born again from above. There is no longer any condemnation for him. He is walking not according

to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. He is washed,—he is justified,—he is sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of his God. In this habitual retrospection of his former guilty life, he feels that now for him, Christ is all. It is by no human power or might, that this darkness has passed from his soul. The truth which he has learned and feels, he was not taught by man. The Saviour alone brought deliverance and peace to him. Jesus alone rescued him from his condemnation, and has established him in grace. And whatever may have been the instruments employed by this Redeeming Lord,—and however he may have honoured and blessed the ministry of man, to lead his sinful soul to himself,—still the man looks up to His power and to His personal presence and agency, above all possible dependance upon any instruments,—to say and to realize, that Christ is all. Every instrument without His presence and blessing, would have been dead and useless. To Him belongs all the praise, for the exceeding riches of His grace, which He has thus freely bestowed upon a guilty and perishing soul. And the redeemed sinner delights to consider his Divine Lord, as having pitied him when he was cast out to perish, and spoken the words of life and healing to his soul.

This retrospection upon old things which have passed away, is one of the peculiar attributes of the man in Christ. Those of my readers who have been brought to this blessed condition, can hardly fail to realize their own experience, in the facts which I have thus stated. As you con-

sider them, let your past experience teach you wisdom in your present state. You are safe, and tranquil, and happy now, in the simple proportion, in which you cling with humble faith to Christ. Cultivate, then, the spirit of thankfulness, for the unsearchable riches of His mercy. Realize that all you have, or can have, is laid up in Him,—and that in the possession of Him as your Lord, you are rich in the exceeding riches of His grace. Vast is the importance to you, of a constant recurrence to this great fact, of your entire dependance upon the Lord Christ. He is your sun and your shield. Seek life, light, and security, only and always in Him. Live upon Him by faith, and grow up into Him, in the knowledge of His grace and truth. Be not entangled by any of the superstitious vanities, which would lead you to a dependance upon human ministries, or human works. Remember that the hour has come for you, when neither upon this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father; when no outward appointments or human services, are to take the place of that spiritual worship, which distinguishes those whom the Father seeketh to worship Him. Cultivate, too, a spirit of tenderness and compassion for unconverted souls. Grace has made you thus to differ. Look upon those from whom you differ, with an anxious desire that they may be partakers of your grace. Be willing to spend, and to be spent,—with no reference to earthly remuneration,—that you may glorify God in their salvation. Consider that you are kept upon the earth, though your souls are renewed

for the atmosphere, employments, and society of heaven, that you may be made useful to others, in leading them to taste and see the grace and loving-kindness of the Lord. O seek a heart to feel for them,—a spirit to labour for their salvation. Be ready to give, to act, and to suffer, that those who are without Christ,—ready to perish,—may be made to know His truth, and to rejoice in His salvation. By all means, save some. Life is valuable for no other end. Upon you, must depend the Saviour's honour, and the Saviour's triumph. May He give you grace, ever to set Him forth, as the only refuge and hope of suffering, dying man.

But I pray you forget not, that the retrospection of the Christian, is the actual state of the sinner's soul. What the one was, the other still is. O think of this, you, who to-day are far off, that you also may be brought nigh by the blood of Christ. God hath set before you an open door, in the all-sufficient and glorious work of His own dear Son. Rise ye also, from this state of death, and fly to Him, whose power can make all things new, for you as well as for those who are now alive in Him. Your means of grace are most abounding; your opportunities of deliverance are most pressing; your dangers are also extreme. For you, the Lamb has died,—for you the Ransom lives. He calls you to come to Him without doubt or fear;—to cast your load upon Him,—to trust yourselves to His all-sufficient grace,—to rejoice in His great salvation. O, awake to a sense of your privileges, as well as your dangers, that you may lay hold of the hope which is set before

you ; and in the security which He will impart to your souls, be able to say, “Thanks be to my God, which giveth me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Think of the increased condemnation which must come upon you, if after you have thus known the way of truth, and seen a Saviour lifted up before you, evidently crucified for you, you shall still reject His offered mercy, and love darkness rather than light. I beseech you by the mercies of God, that ye will not harden your hearts against the love of Christ, and the power of His Spirit: that ye will not bring upon you the awful curse, “Behold ye despisers, wonder and perish, for I work a work in your days, which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you:”—“I have sworn in my wrath, ye shall not enter into my rest.”

Reflect how soon thy life will end,
And think on what thy hopes depend,
What aim thy busy thoughts pursue, —
What work is done, and what to do.

Eternity is just at hand !
And wilt thou waste thy ebbing sand,
And careless view departing day,
And throw thy span of time away ?

Eternity ! tremendous word,
To souls unpardoned and abhorred ;
But oh, if Christ and heaven be thine,
How sweet the accents, how divine !

Be this thy chief, thy only care,
Thy high pursuit, thy ardent prayer—
An interest in thy Saviour's blood,
Thy pardon sealed, thy peace with God.

CHAPTER III.

RETROSPECTION.

THE spiritual condition of a man in Christ, I have proposed to consider, in several of the attributes and facts which distinguish it. The first view of this condition which I have selected for our consideration, is as an useful position for profitable retrospection. From his present point of attainment in grace, the man who is in Christ looks back, upon what he was by nature, and upon the course of folly and sin which he then pursued ; and also, upon the way through which God has led him by His grace to forgiveness and hope, and upon the mercies which he has already received at the Lord's hands. The first of these views, is of old things which have passed away. The second is of the beginnings of things which have been made new. The first we have already considered. The second comes before us for our present meditation. We are now to consider the man in Christ, as contemplating some of the new things which God has been pleased to do for his soul.

The whole of the present life may be considered, and well described, as but the beginnings of the things which are made new for the child of God. It is all childhood in reference to eter-

nity. We see not yet what we shall be. The whole of the present work of grace for man, is but the earnest, of the riches of divine glory in Christ Jesus. The whole attainments of Christian character here, are but the commencement of the eternal character of God's redeemed. And when the man in Christ has passed through the whole of his mortal life, and looks back upon all its scenes, from the margin of the grave, he sees in the whole retrospect, but the commencement of a work, which God will carry on for him, throughout an everlasting state. Upon this commencement of a divine work for his soul, we suppose the man in Christ now to look back. The facts which he sees in it, are various. The feelings also with which he looks upon them, differ very widely. Some of these facts and feelings we will successively consider.

He looks back *upon the first awakening of his soul from his natural state of guilt*, with ardent gratitude. He thinks of the time, when the momentous concerns of religion, as they are presented in the Gospel, first really arrested his attention. This awakening of his mind, to things eternal and unseen, was wholly new to him. Perhaps it was equally unexpected ;—he was thinking of nothing less. God looked upon him in His amazing kindness, when he was perishing without the least concern for himself. The instrument which was appointed to arouse him, may have been severe and painful. But the grace which directed it, and which applied it so successfully to his soul, is worthy of all gratitude and praise. The views of himself, not only of his outward conduct, but

of his inward heart and life, which were opened to his mind, were repulsive and dreadful. But they were necessary, and they proved to be wholesome. The pride of his glory was stained. His boasting spirit was overcome. His vain conceits were broken in the air. Every aspect of his own character, became to him humbling and distressing. He saw and felt that there was no good thing in him. At the time, perhaps, the operation seemed to be a hard and unreasonable one. But now he sees its worth, and the mercy which ordered it. He looks up to God with unspeakable gratitude, that he was willing to have mercy upon a creature so wholly unworthy;—that he did not suffer him to press on in his chosen course of ruin;—that he did not leave him to fill himself with his own devices. He now sees, that the excited feelings of that period of his life were not disproportioned to the occasion which called them out. He has now, far deeper views of his own sinfulness, than he had then. And in reflecting upon that period, he wonders that he felt so little, rather than feels surprise that he mourned so much. Upon this event of his life, he daily reflects with thankfulness and praise. He feels that God hath showed forth in him, a pattern of long-suffering. Above all the blessings of a munificent Providence, and the tenderness of his daily preservation, he places the great love which rescued him from misery and sin, and would not suffer him to remain unmoved and hardened in guilt. He sees that this love of God was boundless in its operation. Though he resisted the divine grace, and drew back from the first

exhibitions which were made to him, of his own depravity and hardness of heart, the divine hand still led him on, and brought him at last, a willing captive, to his present state of security and peace. He now calls upon his soul, to bless the Lord, who had mercy upon him, when he was sinning ignorantly in unbelief. And he gives the whole glory for this work of mercy, to Him who pitied him, and sought him when he was far off, and brought him nigh by the blood of Christ.

He looks back *upon the first devotion of himself to the service of his Redeeming Lord*, with a single determination to adhere to this covenant, to the end of life. Long had divine mercy called upon him in vain. No earnestness of admonition, no tenderness of appeal, could persuade him, to take upon himself the easy yoke and burden, of union with Christ, and obedience to Him. But when the hour came, that he was made willing to enter upon the heavenly path, he united himself affectionately unto his Lord, in an everlasting covenant, never to be forgotten. And now he recalls this solemn dedication of himself to the service of his Lord, as the happiest moment of his life. He thinks of his secret submission to God,—of the hour, when his heart first really accepted the perfect righteousness which was offered him in the Gospel, and gave up its affections to God, in a voluntary and cheerful devotion to His will. He feels it to have been a privilege, as well as a duty ;—honourable and filled with comfort. It was honourable, because he was then truly exalted to be a child of God, and an heir of the kingdom which

He had promised. It was filled with comfort, because it removed from him the burden of his guilt, and gave him peace in reconciliation with the God whom he had offended by such repeated transgressions. He calls to mind, the first public devotion of himself to the service of God, in the ordinances of the sanctuary; when, perhaps, in baptism, he entered into the door of the fold;—or when in confirmation, he publicly renewed and established his covenant with his Great Redeemer;—or when at the Lord's table, he again recorded his obligations to his crucified Lord, and determined to be his alone. He is not ashamed, that he has thus openly confessed the name of Christ, and arrayed himself upon the Lord's side. He remembers his former state of life, but with no desire to return to it. He has put away childish things. All his salvation and all his desire are in Christ,—and he presses forward to the measure of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. He would hold fast that which he has attained, and glory in the riches of a Saviour's love, unto his life's end. He ceases not to give praise to God, who has called him by His grace to this unspeakable privilege, of forsaking all to follow Him. He feels that he then only began to live, when he began to live for Him who had bought him with a price. This was the actual birth-day of his real life. And it is his single and fixed purpose to maintain, even unto death, the covenant of service which he has thus made;—and to be ever, a faithful soldier and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He looks back *upon his limited progress in*

grace and religious knowledge, with sincere humiliation. He thinks of what he might have been amidst the abundant privileges which he has enjoyed. He contrasts with that, what he acknowledges himself still to be. He confesses, that whereas he ought to have been a teacher of others, he has often need, that some one teach him again, what be the first principles of the Gospel of Christ; and he is still such an one, as has need of milk, not of meat, being so unskilful in the way of righteousness. He finds so many unholy habits of thought and feeling, still unsubdued,—so much selfishness and pride still unhumbled,—so much forgetfulness of God still marking his days; that he is often ready to exclaim, “If I am a child of God, why am I thus?—why is this insensibility to religious joys?—this restless chase after earthly vanities?—this partial preparation for eternity?—this clinging to time and sense?” He cannot but feel himself deeply humbled, over such a retrospection as this. Were there not a surer foundation for hope, than his own character and holiness affords, he would be ready to despair of ever entering into rest. There is nothing within himself which gives him comfort, amidst all these evident deficiencies of character, but the witness that God has really given to him, the Spirit of adoption, the desire for obedience, and the determination to persevere in His service unto the end. Though humbled by a consideration of his own actually sinful character, he is conscious of a single purpose to strive to enter into the strait gate, and to endure unto the end, that through

grace he may be saved. His holiness of character has in fact, every day increased, and he has been continually growing more conformed to God. But his views of his own sinfulness; his quick and tender sense of personal guilt; and his apprehensions of the holiness of the character and the law of God, have also so much advanced, that he feels himself in the end, far more vile and unworthy, than he was at first. He casts himself wholly and simply at the feet of Jesus, to be saved according to the good pleasure of His grace, freely by His blood. In himself, there dwelleth no good thing. His own righteousness, is worthless and unclean. And he feels himself to be excluded from all boasting, but in the Lord alone.

He looks back *upon the partial benefits which he has conferred upon mankind*, with the deep conviction that he has failed much in his duty to others. The heavenly treasure which has been placed in his hands, was for distribution to them. The light which he has received, was to have been set upon a candlestick. Perishing sinners on every side were looking to him for spiritual benefits. The heathen world, like a thirsty land, was gasping for the grace, for the dispensation of which he has been made an instrument. How many precious souls might have been saved and blessed, if he had acted up to the measure of his responsibility, he fears to think. But when he realizes, how few have actually been blessed through him,—how little he has really done to promote the salvation of mankind,—how often, and how much, selfishness and indolence, and

pride and covetousness, have come in to hinder his desires and his purposes to do good,—he cannot resist the solemn conviction, that he ought to have done far more, for the glory of God, and for the spiritual benefit of mankind. His time, and powers, and money, ought all to have been the Lord's. He trembles to think, how much he has hid his talent under a bushel, or buried it in the earth. His only hope in this retrospect of life, is that God may have made him an instrument of blessing, beyond his own knowledge or conception. And if he shall meet in glory, a single child of man, who can say, "I owe my salvation under God, to you,"—he feels that the remembrance of such a fact, will be the brightest spot in the deeds of life, on which his memory can rest. The usefulness of a Christian to others, and in this, the glory that he shall bring to God, is the great purpose of his continued life. Certainly this usefulness may be extended, far beyond his own opportunities of knowledge or observation; and he is not always to determine the measure of the results, merely by the facts which are open to his notice. But no Christian can forget this purpose of life, or be indifferent to its attainment. And it will always be, on the one side, a subject for thankfulness, when God has seemed to own, and to bless his efforts; and on the other, of humiliation and sorrow, that he has appeared to do so little, that can be for the divine glory. The man in Christ sees far more of his defects than of his faithfulness in duty, in this retrospection. He has done far less than he has desired,—and he

looks back upon the whole view of himself with self-condemnation and sorrow.

But amidst all his own unworthiness and guilt, and the unprofitableness of his Christian course and character, he looks back *upon the wonderful grace of God which has thus far held him up*, with confidence that it will keep him to the end. His hope rests in no degree upon his own personal character. It is fixed wholly upon the infinite sufficiency of the divine provisions, the everlasting merit of the Saviour, and the unfailing power of His Spirit. But resting here, it has among its comforting attendants and evidences, the recollections of what God has been pleased to do for him, through the riches of His grace. God was mercifully pleased to pluck his feet out of the net;—to set him upon a rock;—to teach him to sing a new song of praise to Him,—the song of Moses and the Lamb. When he was an enemy to God, God reconciled him unto himself, through the blood of His Son. This precious fact becomes clear to his mind, as he discerns the blessed testimonies which are brought out to his view, that his conversion of heart was not by his own will, or by the will of man,—but by the power of God. The all-powerful grace of which he was then made the subject, has never forsaken him. It rescued him then from condemnation,—and it has sustained him in all his conflicts,—comforted him in his trials,—given him joy in the midst of suffering,—and inspired him with a continually rejoicing hope. This grace is all-sufficient, and everlasting. It supplies every want, and removes and overcomes every difficulty. It enables him

to confide in the assurance, that God who has begun a good work in him, will carry it on, in His own way, and to His own glory. With this habitual recollection of mercies which are passed, he reposes with confidence and joy, in the favour and acceptance of the Most High God, who hath led him all his life long, unto this day, and who will still keep his eyes from tears, and his feet from falling; and will give him an inheritance of glory in the land of the living. All his comfort and hope are in this mighty power of God, covenanted for his salvation. The Saviour who loved him when he was dead in sin, exercises an everlasting love. And he cheerfully renounces all other things, for this single, all-sufficient ground of hope. That which God has already done for him, becomes the earnest, and the assurance to his mind, of what he purposes to do for him forever. If when he was an enemy to God, he was reconciled by the death of Christ, much more, being reconciled, he shall be saved by His life. In this humble, but joyful hope, he presses forward, praising God for all that is past;—giving Him all the glory, for the greatness of His love;—and committing every thing for time and for eternity, to His hands.

These are some of the retrospections of the man in Christ. Self is humbled under the burden of conscious sin;—and personal excellence, as a foundation for hope, is entirely renounced. God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is adopted and received by his soul, as his own God, and rejoiced and confided in, as a source of comfort entirely unbounded. The old things which belong to his state of nature, have passed entirely

away. The new things which belong to his state of grace, are encouragements to his hope, that he shall be kept even unto the end. With sincere gratitude, he thinks of the hour of his awakening from sin, and of the day of his dedication unto God. With humiliation, he reflects upon his partial attainments in religious character, and his limited efforts for the spiritual benefit of other men. With humble joy, he calls to mind, the love which has pardoned him, and endured with him, and brought him on thus far in a path of peace. All these retrospections are most profitable to him. They teach him where he may rest his hope, and where he must avoid all confidence. They bring him completely out of himself, and every thing which is his own. They show him how truly and really "Christ is all;"—and cast him entirely upon that grace, which is all-sufficient and unfailing. They teach him how completely every thing is laid up for him, in the power and grace of one Lord, in whom all fulness dwells, and from whom all mercy and spiritual life proceed. It is a lesson hard to acquire, but one most precious when it has been learned,—to live out of ourselves, in spiritual dependance, entirely upon the presence and all-sufficiency of our Glorious Redeemer. And every reflection upon his own life, the more thoroughly convinces the man in Christ, that this is his only course of peace, or safety, or success. It is thus, that retrospection is made a blessing; and experience teaches him a wisdom, which can in no other way be obtained.

And now, that we have taken these views of

the condition of the man who is in Christ, allow me to ask, my readers,—how far do you identify in them, your own experience and state? Permit me to urge upon you, a more simple and uniform cultivation and exercise of the principles which are involved in them. Realize how certainly you are nothing, and less than nothing, and strive to live with entire self-renunciation, upon Him who has accomplished every thing for you, and is alone able, to sanctify and to save you. This is a spiritual exercise, which you never fully learn, and which you cannot learn too fully. There is no magnifying beyond the certainty of its truth, the fact, that in all your spiritual interests, welfare and prospects, “Christ is all.” Seek to be taught it by the Holy Spirit, more and more completely, as you make these inevitable reflections upon life past. Make it the practical fact in your experience, as well as the foundation of your views of doctrine, that all your fulness dwells in Christ.

Allow me to urge you all, to cast away every self-righteous feeling and view, and to enter into the privileges, and possess the benefits, which are freely offered you in the Lord Jesus Christ. In-trust yourselves with entire confidence to Him, as the life and light of your souls, and you will never find yourselves straitened or disappointed there. Consider how much the simplicity of the Gospel condemns those who reject it. God brings these mercies to your very doors. He invites you to partake of them and live. He urges you not to lose a participation in their rich provisions. He warns you that their rejection will be your in-

creased condemnation. What excuse can you offer for rejecting them? You may enjoy them all. Why do you not? Why are not all who read these lines, voluntary and sincere professors of the Gospel of the Son of God,—happy partakers of His promises and inheritance? Surely from no want of conviction of duty,—from no want of ability, or opportunity, to follow out this conviction;—from no want of external privileges and means. But from a strange perverseness of will,—an alienation of affections from God,—an aversion to His government,—and to the plan of His salvation. It is an aversion which contends with all your convictions, and overcomes all the constraint of your sense of need. Even while you feel the danger, it is leading many of you into captivity to ruin,—a ruin, from which you will find no future means of escape. I beseech you therefore, stir up yourselves, to take hold of God's offered mercy, and in your day of visitation, to make your calling and election sure. The Saviour stands ready to receive and bless you. He will heal your backslidings, and cover your unrighteousness. He will give you grace and glory,—and no good thing will He withhold, as your heritage forever.

CHAPTER IV.

ENJOYMENT.

THE character and condition of man in Christ, we have already partially considered. He is in a position in the great journey of his immortal being, at which he has begun to sustain new and peculiar relations to his Divine Creator. No longer an enemy to God in the spirit of his mind, he is now reconciled to Him, and his heart is filial, affectionate, obedient, and confiding towards Him. From this position in his spiritual being, he looks back upon the different scenes through which he has passed, and forward upon other scenes still different, which are yet to come. He stands in a condition of acceptance with God, because Christ, in whom he is, is accepted. He is released forever from the punishment of sin, because Christ, who has answered for him, has borne it fully in his behalf. He is made, and shall be made forever, holy in his mind and character, because Christ, in whom he dwells, and who dwells also in him, is holy, and the fountain of holiness to His people. Of such a man we now speak. We have considered him, as at a point for useful retrospection. Some of the views which he takes, of the old things which have passed

away, and of the beginnings of the things which have been made new, we have also considered.

I purpose now to speak of him, *as in a state of present enjoyment.*

The Holy Scriptures, in exhibiting the life of a servant of God, appear to speak in contradictions. The way in which he travels is a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace. Yet he must take up his cross, and deny himself,—he must suffer persecution,—and through much tribulation, he must enter into the kingdom of God. His condition, is a filling of barns with plenty, and a bursting out of presses with new wine ;—and yet it is a renouncing of all for Christ, and a conformity to the likeness of His sufferings, who had not where to lay His head. He is riding upon the high places of the earth, as a king and a priest unto God ;—he is rich, full, reigning as a king, and all things are his ; and yet he is exposed to be hated of all men,—to have his name cast out as evil,—to be made the filth and the offscouring of the world, for his Master's sake. Here are apparently, great contradictions, in the descriptions which are given of the same object, by the one infallible Spirit of God. The reconciliation of them is easy, when we think of the vast difference which there is between the prospective view, which the carnal mind takes of the things of God, before they are made the subjects of personal experience,—and the experimental view, which the spiritual mind takes of the same things, when man has tasted for himself, and seen that the Lord is gracious. The man in Christ finds no difficulty in understanding, how the path in which

he walks, should be represented, as exceedingly repulsive in the view of others, and yet be at the same time, in the highest degree, attractive to himself. He is at no loss, in reconciling the necessity of actual self-denial and personal mortification, in regard to the power of sin,—with the consciousness of a pure and elevated satisfaction, in the submission of his soul to the will and commandments of God. The thoughtless and irreligious may wonder, how he can find enjoyment in his peculiar life, or what pleasure there can be in taking up a cross, and entering upon a life of voluntary unceasing conflict. But he finds the joys which he possesses, to be not only actual and abiding, but of a very high and valuable character. He considers them as enjoyments, for which, if there were no other recompense proposed, it would be in the highest degree reasonable, to exchange all the delights which are merely earthly and sensual.

The man in Christ is happy *in the consciousness of the spiritual change of mind and character, of which he has been made the subject.* Amidst all his present infirmities, which no one can see so clearly as he does, he still cannot but feel, that after all, he is not what he once was. The contrast between his present state of mind, and that which marked his former period of life, shows him most clearly that he is pursuing far other objects, and deriving his pleasure from far other sources, than those which marked his purposes then. Much as he laments his want of a proper delight in God, he really finds a pleasure in religious duties and services, which was not natural to him, and

which he could never before discover. Low as are still his aspirations and eagerness for heavenly things, he is conscious, that he has for them an estimation and desire, which was no native growth in his own soul, and which could have been only the gift of God. Partial as are all his views of his own unworthiness and guilt, he truly beholds a depth of sin in his own heart, which he used not to see; and he beholds it with a sorrow, which secret sin used not to produce. Faint as are all the affections which he lifts up to God his Saviour, he does exercise towards Him, a thankfulness and love, which were entire strangers to his former self. In all these facts, he sees evidences of a very important spiritual change in his mind and character. In them all, far as he is from what he ought to be, and from what he desires to be, his character is not what it was by nature. The consciousness of this, is a constant source of real enjoyment to his heart. It leads him to the language of unfeigned thanksgiving and praise, that such mercy has been showed to the chief of sinners;—that God has visited him with the dayspring from on high, to guide his feet into the way of peace. And he is thus encouraged still to ask, that he may receive;—to run, that he may obtain;—and to hold fast and watch, that no man take his crown.

He is happy *in the assurance of his pardon and acceptance with God.* He does not pretend infallibly to determine this fact;—but he has a testimony of it, and a degree of certainty regarding it, which is to him a sufficient and a very abundant source of peace and comfort. He beholds the

pardon of his sin, as an act of free and very distinguishing grace on the part of God. And as his chief sorrows arise from the consciousness and pressure of sin, he can gain no peace of mind, but in the well-founded hope, that this pardoning grace has been really extended to him. He sees it freely offered and fully secured, to every penitent, returning sinner, who shall sincerely seek it in the gracious mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. By the sure faithfulness of God's sacred word, it becomes therefore, the actual and certain property, of all who have thus returned to seek and to accept an offered Saviour. In his own conscious change of mind and character, he finds the witness, that he has thus come to depend upon Christ, as his only Saviour and hope. He can therefore apply to himself, the assurance of the forgiveness of sins that are past. Faith in the word of divine promise, that it shall be done, becomes testimony in his mind, to the fact that it is done for him. But beyond this certainty of inference from the divine promise, he has an assurance which springs up immediately within him, without the intervention of any argument from abroad. He has a peace in the reconciliation of his heart to God,—an ability to look up to God as a Father,—an humble, filial confidence, in His love and guidance,—a delight in trusting all to His grace,—a reaching of his spirit after clearer and brighter views of His perfections and love,—an affection and submission in prayer,—a pleasure in attaining a knowledge of the character and will of God,—which become a testimony of the Spirit of God to his spirit, of his pardon and ac-

ceptance with God. From this assurance, he derives abundant and precious satisfaction. The violated law has stilled its thunders, and in strains as sweet as angels use, the Gospel whispers peace. God makes him not to possess the sins of his youth. He has blotted out his transgressions as a thick cloud, and allows him no longer to be an enemy to Him,—but has transformed him into an affectionate and confiding friend. He has been washed from his guilt. He has found peace in his glorified Mediator. He is set upon the rock that is higher than himself, and he has been taught to sing a new song, even of praise to his pardoning God, his own God.

He is happy in *the consciousness of his love for Christ*. He needs no argument to convince him of the fact, that he really loves the Saviour, who hath bought him with His own blood. This Glorious Saviour has been received by him as his chosen and most desired friend. He is dwelling in his heart by faith, the object of his affections, his hope of glory. The same consciousness which he has, that he loves any earthly friend, he has that he loves this best of all friends. He would think it quite unnecessary, to attempt the conviction of himself by a laboured argument, from the facts which he could gather, that he loved his parents, or wife, or children, or any dear earthly object. And he feels it to be still more unnecessary to argue himself into the belief of his real love for Christ. He is more certain of the fact, from his own consciousness, than he could make himself by any process of argument. He can say with Peter, “Lord, thou knowest all things ; thou

knowest that I love thee.” His actual preference above all other things, is for Christ. His real desire and concern are for the glory of Christ. His real fellowship with a Saviour, in a state of earthly deprivations, suits his desires, and his frame of mind, far more entirely, than all earthly blessings could, without the mercy and favour of his Lord. This consciousness of his love for Christ, gives him a pure and abiding pleasure. The divine character, which to the eye of the careless sinner presents no attraction, appears to him clothed with unqualified loveliness. The work of grace, which the carnal mind rejects with heedless unconcern, is shining before his mind, as worthy of all adoration and all acceptance. That his thoughts are not unceasingly occupied with his Glorious Redeemer, is no more an argument that he does not love Him, than the same fact would be a proof of this want of love, in regard to any of his earthly friends. He does not think of any one of them always. But when he does think of them, it is with an undissembled and undoubting feeling of affection. So when his thoughts are directed to the Saviour, it is not as an object of aversion or indifference,—but as an object of sincere desire and love. He has no feeling towards this chosen and precious Saviour but this. He could not say, “I love him not!” without the clear conviction of falsehood to himself. And in this consciousness of his love to Christ, he finds a happiness which is real and most valuable.

He is happy *in a consciousness of the actual victory which the Lord Jesus is accomplishing for him.* The work which the Saviour first commenced

within him, in turning him from darkness to light, he finds Him still carrying on in his heart. Unholy and irritable passions are yielding to the dominion of the Prince of Peace. A love of the world, and of the things of the world, is giving place to an increased estimation and desire for the things which are above. There is still much within him, which gives him frequent and deep distress. But there has been also much done for him, which gives him unspeakable thankfulness and pleasure. And O, how real is the pleasure which he enjoys, when he is able to place his foot upon a vanquished appetite, or a conquered spirit of petulance or pride. Just as the Israelites sang their song of praise, when they saw their enemies dead upon the sea-shore, does he praise God, when he beholds the foes which have oppressed him from within, and from without, bowing their necks beneath a Saviour's feet, and confessing Him in their submission to His power, to be Lord of all. Temptations formerly resistless, have now to a great degree lost their power. Provocations which formerly triumphed over all his own determinations, do not, and cannot now overcome the power of Christ dwelling within him. He has a growing delight in religious duties; an increasing interest in the things which belong to his peace; a conversion more and more entire, of his cares and studies, to the great work of his soul's salvation; an extending submission of his will in holiness to God; an enlarging conformity of his life and character to the will of God. This growth in grace gives him undoubted pleasure. It is certainly far less evident, than he

desires to have it. There is far more unholiness remaining within him, than, amidst all his privileges and means of spiritual benefit, there should be. Yet he cannot but see, that this growth in grace is real and evident. What he could not do for himself, God in infinite mercy is doing for him; overturning the habit and the influence of sin, and carrying him on from strength to strength, that unto the God of gods, he may appear in Zion.

He is happy in *the habitual contemplation of the high and interesting subjects presented in the Gospel*. Even an infidel was compelled to say of the history of our Blessed Lord,—“If Socrates died as a man, Jesus died as a God.” The mind of every serious and reflecting man, may find in the great truths of the Bible,—in the events there described,—in the characters there delineated,—in the promises there bestowed,—a majesty and glory which can be discovered nowhere else. To the truly spiritual mind, these form delightful subjects for thought. The man in Christ loves to contemplate the glories which God hath prepared for them that love Him; to meditate upon what God is, and upon what He has done for man. He finds in such contemplations, an employment and a pleasure which mark him as kindred with the skies, and which give full scope to the highest and noblest powers of his being. “O how I love Thy law,” says the Psalmist, in reference to the Scriptures which are given by inspiration of God, and which testify especially and fully of the Saviour’s glory, “It is my meditation all the day.” The

Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto the man in Christ,—and gives him a delight in meditating upon their character, and upon his interest in them, far above any pleasure which increasing knowledge in mere earthly things can ever bestow. The Bible opens to him its treasure-house of wondrous things. He loves to follow angels in their great occupation of looking into the manifold wisdom of God, as displayed in the work of man's redemption. The more he knows, the more he desires to know, and the more he is able to know of these unsearchable riches of grace,—for he finds no end thereof. Here is employment which is always new, and always affording the highest, and the purest pleasure. And in this, the man in Christ finds continued enjoyment.

He is happy *in a simple confidence in divine protection*. He looks up to God as a very present help in time of need; as a Guardian who has pledged to him his word,—“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” Abiding satisfaction arises in his mind, from the recollection of the uninterrupted presence of this covenant God, around his path, and about his bed. All that he does, is known to Him. Wherever he may go, he is not, and he cannot be, beyond the reach of His inspection and care. In all his concerns, there is therefore nothing contingent or unsettled. Whatever is made a part of his experience, was previously a part of God's great plan of blessing for him. And though to his own dim and feeble power of vision, the future is still entirely inexplicable,—to this divine Protector it

is all present, and all perfectly arranged. God knows the way that he takes,—and when he is tried by Him, it is that he may come forth as gold. O how great is this happiness, in a life of apparent accident, and incalculable chance, to rest with assurance upon the divine ordinance and government,—to realize and perceive, that God is over all, and in all. By His wisdom, will and power, all things are guided, and made to work together for good to them that love Him. The man who is in Christ, is firm, and tranquil, and confident in this blessed assurance, this precious hope.

Calm in the confidence of faith,
He trusts His firm decrees,
Lies humbly passive in His hands,
And knows no will but His.

It is this assurance of a divine protection and power, which enlightens his darkness,—secures him from his foes,—makes even his enemies to be at peace with him,—brings good for him out of every apparent evil,—and keeps his mind in perfect peace, because his trust is stayed on God.

These are some of the pleasures which belong to the man in Christ. They are real and permanent pleasures. They form in his heart, a source of daily joy. They lead him to be more and more thankful, for the grace which has visited him when he was far off in a sinful and hardened state of mind ; and which brought him back to sit down at the feet of his beloved Lord, in the full purpose to cleave with his whole heart

unto Him. They are enjoyments which depend for no part of their worth, upon the power of man's imagination. The heart of man can conceive nothing, which can add to their substantial value. They are flowers of amaranth and gold ever blooming ;—they are springs of living water ever flowing ;—they are hidden treasures which unfold their value, in proportion as they are sought with diligence and desire. Perfectly confident in their own real sufficiency for man, they can say to him, “Come, taste and see that the Lord is gracious.—Come, eat of our bread, and drink of the cup which we have mingled,—that you hunger no more, and go no where else to draw,—for whoso chooseth us, chooseth life, and shall find the favour of the Lord.” Yet in these enjoyments, Christ is all. They arise from His favour. They depend simply upon His smile. They are enjoyed in a spiritual connection with Him. They are not to be found in separation from Him. He that hath the Saviour as his own, hath all these durable riches and enjoyments also with Him.

But to whom do these precious enjoyments belong ? Are they the property of a few only ? Alas, that we should be compelled to say, of a few in fact :—but certainly not of a few of necessity, or by a divine determination. They belong to all who are in Christ ; and whosoever will, is invited. to come to Him, and partake of them. It is a strait and narrow way for carnal nature, yet open beyond the power of man to shut, for the awakened and penitent soul. None who come, can be cast out, nor need any mistake the path who

desire to come. Jesus addresses his kind and attractive invitations to every sinner, and offers a full salvation freely to the acceptance of all. To those who are seeking their pleasures in the corrupting follies of the world, he offers in himself the joys of an eternal kingdom, and of everlasting communion with God. To those who are making gold their hope, and the fine gold their confidence, He presents everlasting gains and glory. To those who are cast down amidst earthly disappointments, He offers a security, in which they shall not be ashamed or confounded forever. And though He requires all to enter upon a path, which seems to the unsubdued heart, nothing but a course of painful self-denial, He assures all that they shall find it in experience, a path of peace.

My friends, these precious offers are presented to you. Can you find no attractions in the Christian's pleasures? Is there no worth, in your estimation, in the enjoyments of the man in Christ? He does not find it so,—nor will any of you, by whom the experiment is made. To the end of life, he feels more and more anxious that nothing should separate him from the love of Christ. Having tried for himself, all that could be found in his original state, without Christ, and the worth of the privileges which he has now received in Christ; he has no desire to go back, to make a re-exchange with sin. O, let this experience of redeemed millions be allowed to convince your judgments, and lead your minds to Christ, as your own chosen Saviour and Lord. Be assured, you will find no disappointment in Him. You will regret nothing which you have given up for His

sake. You will lament no cross or burden which you assume in His service. You will be satisfied with the holy inheritance to which you have awaked, under the new-creating power of His Spirit;—finding His favour to be life, and His loving-kindness better to you than life forever. Can you not say then,—

What though the path which leads to God,
Is thick with woes and troubles strewed,
Yet rather than I back would turn,
I'd wander all my days forlorn.

Only, dear Lord, prepare my seat
Beneath Thy smile, and at Thy feet,
The meanest place Thy courts afford,
Will be a heaven to me, my Lord.

Only secure my living crown,
And foes may hate, and friends disown;
No worldly wealth shall claim my care,
Thy presence only would I share.

How gladly would I yield my breath,
And bow my willing head in death,
If Thou Thy pardoning love proclaim,
And seal my forehead with Thy name.

“Behold thou art mine,” O wouldst Thou say,
How gladly would I flee away;
Keeping my Saviour's throne in view,
And bid this fleeting world adieu.

CHAPTER V.

HOPE.

THE man in Christ, we have already considered, as deeply serious in a retrospection upon his life past, and truly happy in the enjoyment of his present condition. From a consideration of these facts, we will pass on to remark upon some other attributes and facts which mark his present state. In the present view of him, I would exhibit him as *animated by a lively and glorious hope*. This is an entirely new fact in his history. He has been begotten again to the enjoyment of a lively hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. It is a hope which sustains him in every conflict and trial; and which gives him a cheerful, peaceful spirit, in the midst of all his hours of darkness and distress. Literally perhaps, in the actual exercise of hope, he is not peculiar. There is probably no living man wholly without hope. An utter destitution of hope,—a state of actual, unmixed despair, is the characteristic of the sinner's last abode of recompense. There alone, hope comes not, which comes to all who are not inhabitants of that deep abyss. On this side the grave, all men cherish for themselves some kind of hope. Man could not live without it. Whether

this hope be real and substantial, or only imaginary and delusive, in its character and objects, it is still the sweetest solace of human life ; and whatever may be man's burden of cares and labours, it is still found in a great degree sufficient to uphold the spirit of a man, and to urge him forward in the path of effort in his earthly concerns, with alacrity and cheerfulness. In the pecuniary embarrassments which often press him down, he hopes for subsequent, returning prosperity, and still works on with ardour and confidence. In sickness, while he feels the load of pain, he still hopes for returning health, and endures with patience the burden which he is required to bear. In relative sorrows, the hope of future rising peace in his earthly condition, still encourages him to cling to his passing life, and to bear with submission, the yoke which is placed upon his neck. This is the universal property and characteristic of man.

If his eye here and there a thin cloud may behold,
Hope plays on its edges, to tinge them with gold.

The difference between the man in Christ, and other men who are without Christ, is not, that he alone entertains or enjoys, an actual hope of some description, and derives habitual comfort from it ;—but in the remarkable diversity between the objects of their different hopes, and in the opposition of the several grounds upon which they rest them. If it may be said of all men, that they are not destitute of some kind of hope in their present condition,—it may still be said of the man who is in Christ, that his condi-

tion is emphatically a state of hope. He is saved by hope. He rejoices in hope. Hope is an anchor to his soul, both sure and steadfast. And this is so peculiarly his condition, that it is justly said of those who are without Christ, that they have no hope,—that is, no real, well-grounded hope,—no hope of things which are truly permanent and unfading. The true Christian, who is dead indeed to the world, and whose life is hid with Christ in God,—is in actual possession of this most precious comfort of life, and is able to give a sufficient reason for it to others.

The hope of the man in Christ, may be considered chiefly in its *objects*. These objects are various. But they are all contained within the terms of the divine promise ; and they are therefore all secured to him, by the word of God, who cannot lie.

The man in Christ is animated and encouraged by a joyful hope *in regard to all the concerns of his present life*. But these earthly hopes are to be carefully discriminated, lest we give countenance to that secret, sinful spirit, which looks more to the things which are seen and temporal, than to the things which are unseen and are eternal. It is not hope of mere earthly treasures and dignities, though he is not shut out from these. God may bestow them upon his chosen servants ; and the voice of humble, spiritual prayer may be heard, and the evidences of holy, living devotion to God may be seen, amidst all the circumstances of grandeur, which adorn the highest possible station in human life. But these things are not the subjects of divine promise under the Gospel, and

therefore the man in Christ fixes no hope upon the possession of them. Did he possess them, they would perhaps be the occasions and instruments of his severest conflicts and temptations, and he might justly long for the lowest vale of earthly humiliations in their stead. It is not hope either, of freedom from personal cares and sorrows. The servant of God is plagued like other men;—sometimes chastened every day;—and sorrows from a full cup are poured out for him. Sickness and grief, temptation and affliction, mingle themselves in his experience, as they do in the experience of others, and often in a higher degree of suffering. He often realizes in such conditions, that if in this life only, he had hope in Christ, he should be of all men most miserable. This freedom from earthly sorrow, is not a subject of divine promise. Nay, God rather speaks of chastisements here, as the portion of his people, chastening those whom he loveth, and scourging every son whom he receiveth. These are not, therefore, the objects of earthly hope to the man who is in Christ.

But he hopes for perfect security in all the possible changes of this present life. All things work together for good, to those who love God, who are called according to His promise. He is perfectly defended by divine power, from the possible injury to which he is exposed, while he is a follower of that which is good. His earthly advantages may be very small, and his trials may be accumulated and great. But nothing can separate him from that love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. Every tongue that riseth

against him in judgment, he is able to confound; and darkness is made light, and crooked things become straight, in his path. Nothing which can be made to promote his ultimate happiness, can be withdrawn from him. The hairs of his head are numbered, and angels bear him in their hands, lest he dash his foot against a stone. This perfect security from the evil power of trials and enemies, is his portion as a member of Christ, by the certain provisions of a divine covenant. God is a wall of fire about him, by day and night.

He hopes for certain benefit to himself, and equally certain glory to God, as the result from every suffering and loss which he is required to bear. His present dispensations in whatever shape they come, are instruments of personal gain to him, by the same assurance of the divine promise. Peaceable fruits of righteousness must be gathered from the bitter roots of present sorrow. And he learns to look for these, with confidence, and without fear. He is to be stablished, strengthened, and settled, by the operation of the very temptations, in the midst of which he is often in heaviness. His spirit will grow more humble, his mind more heavenly, and his affections more spiritual, under the training which often seems so grievous, that his wounded spirit can scarcely endure its operation. He thus enters upon every path of duty without fear; and upon every contest without carefulness. All that he really possesses, and really values, is always secure; laid up in the keeping of a Being whose truth remaineth; and whose power cannot be overcome. These two facts, which are the subjects of the

divine promise, and, therefore, of a proper Christian hope, cover all the possible changes of the present life. The power of harm is removed from every trial; and certain and abiding benefit is to be brought by divine ability and determination out of every painful dispensation. This is the portion of the man who is in Christ, because he is there. It is a result of the everlasting covenant, in all things well ordered and sure, which God has there made with him. And thus on the very journey to his home, while he has here no continuing city, but is seeking one to come, he actually enjoys more of the real comforts of the road, than any of those who are without Christ can, though they have made it their rest, and have said in the madness of their hearts, "Here will I dwell, and this shall be my heritage forever, for I have a delight therein."

The man in Christ is animated by objects of hope, which are entirely peculiar to the condition in which he is placed, and appertaining to his state as a member of Christ. These are spiritual and invisible things. But notwithstanding this, they are real, and inestimably valuable. They are entirely secure, and wholly unfailing, because they depend simply upon the power, and the promise of an unchanging God. They are hopes, therefore, which cannot be cut off; which are not affected by earthly changes, and which remain imperishable, though all things should seem to be against him to whom they are given.

He hopes for *full and permanent victory over all that is evil*, both in the corruptions of his nature, and the temptations of his state. Sin cannot have

the dominion over him, because he is under the protection and government of grace. The sure promise of God secures to him a new heart, and will make him, eventually, holy as God is holy. Infirmities press upon him. Passions and tempers of an unholy character rebel against him. Sin is mingled with the very best services which he performs. The plague of his own heart is brought out to his view, with a clearness of exhibition, and a bitterness of influence, which fills him with unutterable distress. But though, amidst this fearful display of secret sin, his spirit is sometimes overwhelmed within him, he still has a sure hope of victory through the power of God which worketh in him, and which is promised to him. This blessed hope supports and comforts him, while struggling with many foes, and enduring much hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. When he mourns over past deficiencies,—when he grieves for his backslidings from God,—when he dare hardly deem himself a child, so pressing and victorious seems to him the power of sin within him,—this sure hope of final triumph over sin gives him encouragement and joy. God will make him at last, a conqueror, because Christ, to whom he belongs, and in whom he lives and dwells, has already conquered. The hour will yet come, when, with a perfectly pure and peaceful spirit, he shall adore the grace which has sanctified him wholly, and made the bones within him which have been broken, to rejoice. With this hope he presses forward in the path of duty, mingling songs of praise, with his cries and tears beneath the burden of sin; so that it may be sometimes

said of him, as of the Israelites at the building of their second temple,—you can hardly discern between the noise of the shout of joy, and the noise of the weeping. But of his riven and contending soul it may be also said, as of that house, and with equal certainty, “In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.”

He hopes for a *full and everlasting acceptance before God*. I say he hopes for this,—for although he has it now, by the certainty of the divine promise, yet its glory has not been fully revealed to him, for his own present actual enjoyment. But his confidence rests upon one who is mighty to save. Being one with Him, he has all, and abounds in him,—in reference to his full justification in the sight of God,—and he can look up to Him as to an accepting Father, with undoubting confidence, and without fear. He knows in whom he has believed. He is willing to venture every thing upon the revealed sufficiency of a divine Saviour. When God shall enter into judgment with his soul, he knows that there is one who hath borne his burden, and is near to justify him. In the perfect ability of that Mighty Substitute, he is safe forever. And although it does not yet appear what he shall be, he knows that when He shall appear, he shall be like Him, and see Him as He is. This blessed hope comforts and encourages him under a sense of guilt, beneath which he truly mourns;—amidst all the accusations of his own conscience, and all the recollections of his past folly and sin. This supports him, when Satan tempts him to despair. This gives him a sufficient answer, when many tongues

rise against him in judgment, and call for the condemnation of his soul. The abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness which he has received, supply every want, and remove every fear. And, comforted with the assurance of this hope, he endures continually, as seeing Him who is invisible.

He hopes for a *triumphant entrance into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ*. His present term of being is short, and coming rapidly to its conclusion. Its final hour is fixed, how near he knows not. The Judge standeth at the door. As he daily sleeps, and wakes again, he goes through the daily semblance of his departure. He cannot but often think of it seriously, and with a solemn calculation of its results. But, though his heart is sometimes afraid, he has a bright and blessed hope connected with this hour. When it comes, it will be an hour of liberty. The Saviour will attend his departure from the earth;—HE will watch over the operation of his dying hours,—like the skilful refiner who has placed his precious substance in the crucible, and marks it with an intense interest and observation, while he applies the proportion of heat which is necessary to accomplish his design regarding it. The chamber where the Christian meets his death, is indeed a sacred spot; privileged beyond the common walk of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven. There is no fear in such a death;—there are no bands of servitude in such a departure. He is in the everlasting arms of a Saviour omnipotent, and he will soon be with Him in His glory. The dying strife will soon be over. The spirit's jubilee

has come. It is to be free from bondage forever. And however the saint may suffer in the flesh, for a little time if need be, in a moment he will be at home. Death is uniformly made an occasion of peaceful joy to the man who is in Christ. Through his whole life, he looks forward to this hour with hope as the appointed time, when he shall receive an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of his Lord and Saviour.

He hopes for a *future glorious resurrection of his body from the grave*, in a spiritual and undying form and nature. This is a peculiar and blessed hope which the Gospel gives. With this hope, he parts with his mortal body, that like a seed sown in the earth, it may go through its appointed process of decay, to a future brighter and more beautiful manifestation. Jesus, as a faithful Creator, will watch over it, till His own appointed hour shall come. In that hour, He will raise it from the dust of the earth again, however apparently commingled and lost, and bring it to the glory which He has provided for it. The man in Christ confides in this hope, as founded upon a divine assurance, and rejoices to contemplate the day, when the Lord shall return with the archangel's shout, to be glorified in His saints, and when those who are asleep in Christ, shall arise to meet Him in clouds, when the uncounted myriads of His people shall reflect the brightness of His own appearance, and manifest the power of His grace, and the riches of His glory.

He hopes for a *crown of glory in the great day of his account with God*. When in body and spirit again united, he stands before God in judgment,

it will be to have his full salvation there proclaimed. He shall shine as the sun, in the kingdom of his Father. He shall be brought with triumph to God, as the reward of the travail of a Saviour's soul. The crown which he receives, is the recompense of a Saviour's merit. The righteousness which earned and deserved it, was the righteousness of Christ. But it is by the grace of Christ bestowed upon him, and secured to him, as his eternal portion. Jesus has triumphed, and His servants and people have triumphed in Him. Jesus has merited, and they receive the reward which He has earned for them. To this glorious day, the man in Christ looks forward, when the Lord shall make up His jewels, and receive His servants with an affectionate welcome, to His own abode.

Then he hopes to dwell with Christ forever. So shall he be ever with the Lord. So! So raised, and sanctified, and crowned;—so accepted and welcomed, and triumphant. This is the grand end of all his plans, and labours, and desires. He asks for no heritage on this side Jordan. He looks for a permanent abode with Christ. He looks for this, as the final, crowning gift of grace. The life and principle of his religion here, is personal union with the Lord Jesus Christ. All his hopes spring from this union, and were given to him, when this union was perfected in his conversion. But here, the influence of this principle is but gradually developed. He is drawn continually nearer to Christ, and enjoys more of the presence of his Saviour in his soul. But yet all that he knows is but in part, and all that he sees,

is through a glass darkly. There, this union is exhibited in all its glory, and bestowed upon him in all its blessedness. He dwells forever with Christ, and Christ forever with him. But who on earth can speak of these glorious results of faith and hope for those who are with Christ. It hath not entered into the heart of man, to conceive the least part of the joys which God has prepared for those who love Him.

Faith strives, but all her efforts fail,
To trace them in their flight;
No eyes can pierce within the veil
Which hides that world of light.

These are the precious hopes which belong to the man in Christ. They are found by him, growing more dear and precious to him every day. As years multiply upon him, and cares press around him; these become more constantly his light and his comfort, in the house of his affliction. They literally *save* him. He is "saved by hope." He would have perished without them, and utterly have fainted, had he not believed to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living. In all these precious hopes, *Christ is all*. They are founded upon His word,—they depend upon His power. They are composed of blessings in prospect, which He only can give. He is himself the great object of them, including all other objects of desire in His own person and love. He is Himself the hope which is as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast. The man in Christ is a man of trials and sorrows. He mourns over the darkness of the world around him;—he is

grieved with the corruptions which go under a Christian name ;—he is pained with the inconsistencies of professed believers ;—he is deeply anxious amidst the dangers and trials to which the truth is exposed ;—he groans under the burden of sin, and over the plague of his own heart. But amidst all this pressure upon him, he has still a bright and glorious hope ; and in this he cannot but rejoice, and he does rejoice.

How unspeakably precious would these hopes be to all ! How sad is the thought, my beloved friends, that many of you first see their worth, in the consciousness of their final loss ; and behold too late, the unspeakable glories which you have vainly and sinfully cast away ! O that you would think of the importance of this ! Here is the great concern for you. How happy would it be for you, would you give half the attention and care to this, which you are ready to devote to the mere dead discussions of religion, or to the vanities of a dying world ! Here come, to the feet of Jesus,—an appointed and sufficient Lord,—make Him the object of your choice, and your confidence. You will find there, a glorious hope,—a comforting and satisfying hope. It will watch around you as a ministering spirit from on high. It will stand by you, as an angelic messenger of peace. It will supply you with daily provisions of joy and strength. Why will you not embrace it, and hold it fast ? Who of you is excluded from its offers ?—who is driven away from the feast of joy which it prepares ? Why stand you remote from a blessing so free, and so precious ? My friends, every interest for you, is involved in the posses-

sion of this blessed hope ;—a possession which is imparted by no mere ordinances or ministries of man, but by the converting and transforming power of the Holy Ghost, forming Christ within the heart. Seek, then, the blessing thus proposed. Seek it sincerely, and with your whole heart. Seek it in a self-renouncing, humbled spirit. Seek it with a determination to find and to possess it,—but seek it only in Christ ;—in an acceptance of His offered pardon ; in a trust in His perfect and sufficient righteousness ; in a choice of His service, and a willingness to suffer and to count all but loss, for His sake. Seek this blessed hope, as the great business before you, to which every other object, relation, and engagement in life, is to give away ; resolved to come out, and be separate from sin, and to walk in newness of life, under a Saviour's guidance. Thus shall you find yourselves sheltered and comforted in Christ, and built up and protected in Him, for every duty,—in every trial,—and for the enjoyment of His glory ; filled by the God of hope, with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER VI.

SECURITY.

THE view which I now purpose to exhibit of the man in Christ, is that of his *entire and final security*. He is in a state in which the mercy of God has placed him, unalterably and finally secure. How exceedingly precious and important, this view of his condition is, every reflecting mind is competent to estimate and understand. The very thought of such a security as possible for man, in the midst of a changing and unsettled world like this, comes with a peculiar refreshment and delight over the mind. In earthly arrangements, the universal experience of man shows that nothing is secure. The life and ingenuity of man are literally expended, and the varied powers of man are taxed to their utmost extent, in guarding against the occurrence of anticipated losses and dangers. The chief exhibition which is made of human wisdom, is in the success of the expedients which man contrives for this purpose. Fear treads upon the heels of every investment, and every occupation. He cannot build him an habitation, but he must guard and insure against the devouring flame. He cannot send his merchandise to traffic upon the ocean, but he

must provide for all the fears of winds and storms. He cannot confide his property to the hands of his fellow-man, but the known depravity and unfaithfulness of man unsettles all his expectations, and fills him with doubt. He cannot fasten his affections on a child, or a friend, but disease will eat down his idol, or ingratitude will punish his idolatry. This is the character of the world in which man dwells, and the universal experience of man as he passes through it.

Amidst all these changes, and these fears of change,—as the attributes of earth,—is there any real security to be offered to man? Is there any foundation upon which his hope and his confidence may rest without fear? Certainly not in the things of this world. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” This is the portion of fallen and imperfect man. This is the very atmosphere in which he is born,—the inheritance which he cannot avoid. And as surely as you will find water in the ocean, or behold the sparks ascending, will you find trouble and insecurity to be the natural and universal inheritance of man.

But there is security in Christ. “Be of good cheer,” says He, “for I have overcome the world.” The outward condition and the present temporal concerns of His people, may be the subjects of continual decay and alteration;—like the waters of the troubled sea when it cannot rest, unceasingly moving, never to be settled. But their real interests,—their abiding concerns, become perfectly immovable and secure in the provisions of the Gospel, and under the dominion of the Saviour. Though in the world, they have no con-

tinuing city, they may still here receive, and here possess, a kingdom which cannot be removed. This certain security is the unspeakable privilege of the true Christian. The "man in Christ," with a new mind and heart, by a faith which is of the operation of God, has accepted Christ as his foundation, and rests himself wholly upon Him. He has thus by the Holy Spirit, been united unto Him forever. In this connection, he is happy in a state of present enjoyment,—animated and encouraged by glorious hopes,—and made perfectly secure from harm and loss, in any change or trial to which he may be exposed. This divine security is the point now before us.

All security has reference to some anticipated possible loss; and the value of the security rises, in proportion to the worth of the interests which are at hazard. But here, the interest contemplated, is the spiritual, permanent welfare of man,—his undying existence,—his glorious immortality. In this connection, temporal things are not to be considered. The security of which we speak, is a spiritual, permanent security. There are three sources of danger appertaining to the interests of the soul, which every reflecting man must apprehend as possible to himself:—*Present condemnation,—eventual captivity under the dominion of sin,—and final rejection from the glorious presence of God.* No other harm or loss can be anticipated for the soul, than will come under one, or the other, of these three classes of danger. To each of these dangers, the man without Christ is inevitably and absolutely subjected.

From them all, the man in Christ is made entirely and infallibly secure.

The man in Christ, is entirely secure *from present condemnation in trial before God*. This trial all men must sustain. In fact all men are passing through it every day they live. The work of each day as it passes, is finished in itself. And though its actual results may yet be changed while other days of grace remain,—its facts as it passes, and the character of those facts, are unalterable for eternity. God is thus continually proving men, and passing judgment upon them. They are daily, either accepted and approved, or condemned and rejected, by Him whose judgment is according to truth. Men are taught to look forward to a future hour, when this long series of judgments shall all be made up;—when there shall be a final investigation and settling of human character and condition;—when the astounding results of human life shall be brought out;—and the whole family of man shall be, for a succeeding eternity, either approved or condemned, before a just and Holy God.

But God also teaches us, that sinful men are condemned already;—condemned every day. The Great Judge of all, in His heart-searching power, is marking and recording the conduct of man from day to day;—and the result of actual transgression and guilt discerned in man, is disapprobation and condemnation. O how important,—how alarming is this view of the relation of unpardoned man to his Creator! He walks forth continually, a sinner under the wrath of God. Examined faithfully and justly in the ha-

bitual character and conduct of his life, he is every day rejected and condemned. The unconverted man seeks no refuge, but in his own excellence and worth. He stands alone. No other being shelters him, or pleads for him. He lies down, and he rises up, under the condemnation of his righteous Judge. A dark life, and an infinitely darker eternity, are before him. All the dispensations of divine government, only serve to ripen him in his sins, for final destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.

From all this condemnation, the man in Christ is entirely secure. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. Through the riches of divine grace, he has been united to a Saviour, who has borne all his guilt. The law of God demands no other penalty, than that which has been already endured for him; and which he has been taught and enabled by the Holy Spirit, to embrace and plead before God. Christ has been made for him, a debtor to do the whole law, as an obedience and a sin-offering for him. In his relation to this atoning Redeemer, having an eternal personal union with him, he stands perfectly accepted before God;—his sins are pardoned, his backslidings are healed, his infirmities are endured with, and his soul is sheltered and loved forever. Though he is in the flesh, he is not walking after the flesh, but after the Spirit;—and the Spirit of Christ dwells within him. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and death. He daily offends; and if he should ever say he had no

sin, the truth would not be in him. But his life is not that of a wilful sinner, for he is born of God, and his seed remaineth in him; so that his sinfulness of nature, which is not a sinfulness of choice, is pardoned; and he is every day accepted with God, in that Saviour, who, by one offering, hath perfected forever, them that are sanctified. He is thus delivered from present condemnation, because he is in Christ. He is blessed of the most High God, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

The man in Christ, is secure *from all future captivity under the power of sin*. Sin shall never be allowed to have dominion over him. An unconverted mind is ruled wholly by the principles and propensities of a sinful nature:—it is, voluntarily and by continual desire, under the power of sin. Though perfectly conscious of its sin, and often feeling the importance of a deliverance from its power, it is still a willing captive, and determines, for the present at least, to abide in this condition, though the Gospel unceasingly and freely offers liberty from the power of sin. But the soul which has been led to fly for refuge to Jesus, to receive him as a Saviour, and to yield to his authority as a Ruler, finds the dominion of sin, and its own captivity to it, to be broken. The strong man armed is by the power of the Holy Spirit, cast down and overcome. The reigning power of rebellion has been dethroned, in the conversion of the heart to God. The dominion of grace has been established within it by divine power. This is an actual conquest, of which every converted man has been the subject.

The captivity of Satan has been led captive by the power of the Son of God. But after this amazing change in man's condition, there may be supposed a twofold danger possible, of the future restoration of the power of sin;—either from a change in the dispositions of man himself, or from the superior power of the enemy with whom he is obliged to contend. From both of these dangers, however, the man in Christ is made entirely secure, and by the same power.

He is rescued from the possible disposition of his own infirm nature to go back again to his folly, because he has received as a divine gift, a new heart. He has been brought voluntarily to choose a new path of conduct. His affections are really set upon new objects. These new affections are every day increasing in their power and constraint. He loves the things of God, and he loves them more and more. His mind is continually more alienated from disobedience, and more abhorrent of sin. He presses forward in the paths of holiness, because he has a delight therein. To suppose him to turn again with desire to the paths of sin, is to suppose him, either discovering deception and unsoundness in the heavenly objects which he pursues, which is impossible; or else to suppose, that continual love for an actually precious and much-valued object, has in itself a tendency to turn into hatred and dislike, which is absurd. How can sin ever again appear attractive to him, when he is dead indeed, unto sin, and it is the abominable thing which he hates? All his desires are by the Divine Spirit

averted from sin; and with his own wish, its dominion can never again be restored.

But can he be led captive by its superior power, without his own consent? Still less is this possible. It was by absolute superior power that he was rescued from its influence at the first. Can the almighty power which then delivered him, fail? Nay, it has pledged itself to him, that sin shall not have dominion over him. The power of sin is broken, and though it dwells within him, it is only as a captive. It may be a restless captive,—an insurgent, unwilling captive,—but it is a captive still. It is left there, as the Canaanites were left in the land of Israel, to prove him, to make him watchful, to lead him and to excite him to pray and strive for farther conquests. While he rests upon the power of Christ, he may glory even in his infirmities, and feel that even when he is weak, then is he strong. His personal holiness is the subject of a divine covenant with him. God will make him holy, for HE is holy. He has solemnly bound himself to do so. Sin cannot therefore have dominion over him, unless the enemy shall prove to be stronger than God. This is his certain security; and though his heart may be sometimes overwhelmed within him, it is still a joy to him, to reflect, that God hath solemnly confirmed to him His promise never to forsake him. The victory which has been obtained for him, is therefore, a final victory; and he shall be kept by divine power, through faith unto salvation.

The man in Christ is secure *from rejection in the hour of his final trial*. All men look forward

to this day of account. There is an undeniable inward conviction in the mind of man, which it is extremely difficult to silence, that every secret thing shall finally be brought into judgment, before the Living God. Then the register of human life will be exposed, and men will be judged according to the deeds done in the body. Then, the man who bears his own guilt must sink forever. He cannot answer before God, for one of a thousand of his faults. And when infinite power, armed and directed by unerring justice, enters into contest with him, it will be impossible for him to escape. But the man in Christ will not bear his own guilt. It has already been laid upon a Divine Saviour, who has borne it for him freely and entirely. Jesus has carried all his grief. And what penalty remains then, for man to bear himself? There is not one conditional justification of man now, and another actual one then which is dependant upon man's own fidelity of conduct. The believer in Christ is now justified, and having peace with God, is justified forever. Then his acceptance will be publicly owned and declared in the presence of the Lord of all;—and the evidences arising from his faithfulness in life, will be brought forward to testify to the blessed fact. God will proclaim him as His servant and His property forever, and will receive him with a joyful welcome to His own abode. Though his sins have been as scarlet, they shall be found as white as snow. He can bear to have them all exposed, because their guilt and condemnation has been removed, and the Saviour is glorified in the amazing grace

which has been manifested in their forgiveness. He makes mention of his Redeemer's righteousness, even of that only; and whatever may be the accusations against him, this conquering Lord will answer for him, and he is secure. God will acknowledge him before the countless multitudes of the redeemed, as His own; as a jewel of His choice, forever and ever. And shouts of grace, grace,—shall exhibit and proclaim the bringing forth of the topstone of his salvation in the kingdom of his Father.

This is the *security* of the man in Christ. When these dangers are removed, there can be no other cause for fear to him. Secure in these facts, he is secure forever. God is the portion of his inheritance, and of his cup. In the Lord, he is justified, and he glories forever. There, is the simple foundation of his security. It does not depend in any degree, upon his own strength or works. It rests upon the simple fact, that he has been made through grace, a member of Christ,—of an all-conquering Saviour. His personal character is the evidence of his state. It bears the same relation to his actual condition, which the hand upon the dial-plate bears to the main-spring or the weight within. That is, it announces his real state to the eyes of others. If a man is not manifestly and uniformly, a holy, watchful, persevering Christian in his character and conduct, he is not in Christ at all. He has no spiritual connection with the Saviour. The Lord Jesus can dwell in no heart, but as the principle and source, of a new and holy life. But if a man be manifestly a holy, watchful man, he is not secure

from condemnation because he is so, but because Christ the Lord, who hath chosen him to be His servant, maintains his cause, and answers for him before the throne of God. His own best deeds can never bear the scrutiny of divine inspection. His very imagination that they can, would itself destroy their worth entirely. Such a thought indulged, would be the pride of a fallen spirit. The ripest and the best fruits of grace in the Christian soul, are the deep lowliness and humility which cast down every high imagination, and lay all the glory of all the work of man's salvation at the feet of the anointed Saviour. Faith which lays hold, and keeps hold, upon Christ alone, is the single instrument of safety to man. This cleaves to the blessed hope which is set before him, and rejoices in the conquests of the Lord alone.

How unspeakably important to guilty man, is a security like this! When a conscious sinner is going forward to his trial, is not the assurance that he shall come off secure, of inestimable worth? When the dying patient has summoned his physician, is not the assurance of certain recovery, and of future deliverance from disease, of priceless value? But such certain security as this, is offered only in Christ. Realize its worth,—its preciousness to you. Through how many scenes must you pass, when you will require His presence and aid? How many hours of trial and distress will there be, when you cannot do without Him! You may look upon other friends, until they bid you farewell upon your dying bed. You may enjoy earthly treasures, until the last hour of life covers them with its pall of darkness.

But then you will pine and sicken for the support, which is only to be found in Christ. You cannot behold an approaching judgment, or meet an unchanging eternity, on any other ground, than the perfect acceptance of your soul in the infinite sufficiency and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no security for you then, but in Him. This is the security which is now offered to you in the Gospel. How easily it is to be obtained! How much does this fact increase your ingratitude and guilt! If God had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, when He only says, "believe and be saved." The only security for your souls is *in* Christ. Receive Him,—submit to Him,—love Him;—and He offers all to you freely. Every blessing is thus proposed to you,—brought to your doors,—urged upon your acceptance. It is not to go up to the heaven, or down into the deep. It is but to take the mercies which are brought to your hearts, and thrust upon your acceptance. The responsibility upon you, is not of *getting*, but of *rejecting*, the unspeakable mercies of God. How amazing is the heedlessness, which shall reject such mercies, and such a Lord! You act in no other concerns, upon such principles as these. Smaller matters far, by your own acknowledgment, occupy your mind intensely. You drive through the world in ardent, anxious pursuit, of business, and gain, and pleasure. Your whole earnestness of soul, in purpose and feeling, can be given to earthly things. Alas! that all your energy should be wasted upon engagements which cannot profit; that you should have a taste

for every thing which perishes in the using, and no heart left for the Glorious Redeemer who so affectionately invites you to find rest in Him. Why will you thus submit to the hardening influence of an unconverted heart? Why, in defiance of all your convictions of interest and duty, drive from your souls that Blessed Spirit, who struggles within you, to lead you to embrace the provisions of the Gospel? Return, return to God,—from all your wanderings in folly,—from all your love for the things of this vain world; and seek and find in Christ, a fulness of peace,—a security of salvation,—an inheritance of life for evermore.

How wonderful is that infatuation which strives against the Divine Spirit who would lead men to Christ, and struggles with the attracting influence of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, as if it were a forcing of man into Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, heated sevenfold! Yet this is the course and conduct of unconverted men. Thus do they always resist the Holy Ghost, and cast away with determined obstinacy, all the boundless mercies of the Gospel.

CHAPTER VII.

HONOUR.

“ A CHRISTIAN is the highest style of man.” It is the peculiar title which permanently connects him with all beings who are more elevated in station, and more abundant in wealth and power, than himself. This is the view which I purpose now to take of the man in Christ, as of a man occupying a position of *very peculiar honour*.

The standard of honour is in the relations which man sustains to others around him. The honour of this world is in the comparative elevation of men in wealth, or power, or learning ; or in any of the artificial distinctions in human society, over their fellow-men. It is regulated by a connection with those who are in superior stations. It is acknowledged in the homage and respect of those who are inferiors in their condition of life. It is fed and kept in life, by the anticipation and hope of something yet more exalted, to be obtained. And yet its highest attainment is as transitory and as uncertain as its lowest. Man being in honour, abideth not. In reference to the certain passing away of all his most valued earthly distinctions, he is like the beasts which perish.

The station which is occupied by the man in

Christ, is in the highest degree, honourable to him; and is a permanent and imperishable elevation. It gives him an union of family, and name, and expectations, with worlds of beings who are all higher, and more powerful, than man is able to conceive. It bestows upon him, an adoption into the family of the Living God; and an heirship in the everlasting inheritance of his children. Each angelic being is a brother and a companion to him. Beings so powerful, and so glorious, that men have trembled for fear, when they have momentarily beheld them in their glory, are united to him, in the deepest and most permanent affection. He is made a fellow-citizen with the saints, and one with the spirits of the just made perfect. The Great God and Father of all is his God and Father. To him he is united in Christ Jesus by a bond of inexhaustible, inextinguishable grace and love. He is a partaker of that holy fellowship with God, which is the joy of heaven, and the honour and privilege of glorified saints.

Such honour have all His saints. And yet the almost uniform feeling of the carnal mind, connects with a religious profession and character, precisely the opposite association. Such a mind is opposed to God, as well in its judgment of truth, as in its tastes, desires, and pursuits. And in this false estimate of character, it gives an illustration of that entire perversion which transgression has produced in the nature of man. Guilty man must sacrifice his imaginary independence, renounce his own avowed excellence, and acknowledge the great personal wants and personal unworthiness which truly distinguish him,

before he can be received into the family of God, and be clothed with the garments of His righteousness, and His salvation. Such demands seem extremely derogatory to human pride; and for this reason, multitudes reject all the offers of the Gospel to themselves, and affect to regard, and to treat with contempt, those who yield to the invitations which they despise, and submit to the motives which they renounce, as unworthy and degraded persons. In their view, true piety is humiliating, not ennobling to the character and station of man. Yet God says,—“those who honour me, I will honour.” And while He is possessed of glorious majesty, it must be ever to His creatures, an unspeakable honour to be connected with Him, and to be united to Him. Such honour has the man in Christ;—and some of the facts which contribute to this excelling glory, we will briefly consider.

The man in Christ has *a most elevated object of pursuit*. The Holy Spirit divides the objects of human pursuit, into two classes,—the “things which are seen and are temporal, and the things which are unseen and are eternal.” The man who is in Christ dwells as much in the necessity of his present being, among things visible and temporal, as the man without Christ. This is the inevitable law of his being. His dispensation and his duty are, to use the world as not abusing it; to make even that which is to others, the mammon of unrighteousness, the instrument of preparing him for everlasting habitations. But these earthly things are not the things at which he aims. They are not the real objects of his pursuit. In-

deed, the natural desires of man cannot be satisfied with the perishing portion of this world, even when he pursues it with the most devotion, and attains it with the most abundant success. He is secretly conscious of possessing powers and capacities, which are far too lofty to be chained down to earth; and however he has gained, he feels himself to be without hope, and to have spent his strength for naught, when God takes away his soul. But earth has a far different aspect and influence when used as an home, and when used as a journeying place to another and eternal home beyond it. This is the condition and purpose of the man in Christ. His object lies beyond the verge of earth. He is pursuing an incorruptible treasure, and he strives to pursue it with increasing earnestness, in every new condition in which he is placed. He is labouring with increasing zeal and desire, to walk worthy of God, who has given him His image, and called him to His kingdom and glory. Every attainment which he makes in likeness to his Redeemer, and in submission to his God, gives him increased satisfaction and delight. The more earnestly he loves, and labours to gain the heavenly things before him, the happier he feels in a reflection upon his own condition. He is never ashamed of any efforts which he puts forth in this pursuit, nor dissatisfied with the objects which he really gains. The crown before him is in his view, worthy of all his labours. The nearer he approaches to it, the more attractive, and glorious does it appear. And however the world around him may affect to despise his course, in casting away the baubles which it calls treas-

ures, he feels himself to be pursuing an end, which will be eternally precious and honourable, when all earthly things shall have faded and fallen forever. And in the certainty, and the worth of this blessed and exalted object of pursuit, is one important fact of the honour of his condition.

The man in Christ has a *real independence of the world*. Just in proportion as our hearts are truly fixed on God, and filled and actuated with the power of His grace, do the changes of the present life cease to affect us. The unfailing rule of the divine government in the family of God, is that all things work together for good to those who love Him. The experience of His children is an enjoyment of the elevation and tranquillity which arise from this unchanging law. St. Paul could say, when looking forward to bonds, imprisonment, and death,—“None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” I would not be understood to say that every man in Christ uniformly feels thus independent. But he certainly does so, in proportion to the simplicity of his faith in God, to the power of his religious spirit, to the attainments of his religious character, and to his real perception of the fulness of his inheritance in Christ. His infirmities may often press him down into the vale of care and trial. His faith may be often weak, and his light obscured. But the rule of his condition is actual independence, and the increasing spirit of it is con-

scious independence, of the world around. The vain and fickle judgments of the world do not trouble him. Its alluring provisions for sensual appetite do not entice him. Its threats and denunciations do not alarm or deter him. Its persecutions cannot affright him, or turn him back from his known and chosen duty to God. He exercises himself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men. He is in sure possession of a kingdom which cannot be removed;—and he is as happy in its possession, when affliction and distress are heaped upon him, as when prosperity and earthly joys surround him. This is real independence of the world. For who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth on the Son of God? The habitation of such a man is founded upon a rock; and storms and winds will beat upon it, entirely in vain. And in this real and abiding independence of the world, is another element of the honour which belongs to the man in Christ.

The man in Christ is *intimately connected with high and ennobling relations*. The whole elect of God are united together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of His dear Son. In Him, elect angels are upheld in duty to God. In Him, elect men are gathered from all lands, and made partakers of the divine nature, and the divine love. To this great and holy fellowship, the Spirit of God brings every converted, believing soul. They come thus, in the exercise of that living faith which unites them to Jesus, unto the city of the Living God,—the heavenly Jerusalem,—to the innumerable company of angels, and to

the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. The man in Christ is a citizen of no mean city. His name is written in heaven. He is encompassed on earth by heavenly guards; and however he may be despised, and counted as nothing, by the world around him,—the manifestation to their view, of those who watch over him, who are interested in him, and have a common inheritance with him, would strike the earth with awe and terror. This amazing manifestation is yet to be made, when Jesus shall appear in His glory, and acknowledge His saints in the midst of surrounding millions;—when they shall shine in His presence, like the brightness of the firmament, and like the stars forever and ever. But the glory of this high connection is not now the less real, though it be the less apparent. The children of God are sojourning in a land of strangers. But they are not the less certainly, the heirs of the divine promises, and partakers of an immovable and incorruptible kingdom. It doth not yet *appear* what they shall be:—but this is all. The believing soul is now made by the Holy Spirit, one with Christ; and whatever glory Christ possesses, is his also, by the divine covenant and gift. The man in Christ has thus, his conversation, his citizenship in heaven. He is taught the language of praise and love, which is the dialect of heaven. He is a son of God; and wherever there are beings, whose affections and powers are consecrated to God his Father, there are those who are united to him, in the closest intimacy, and the most imperishable relations. This connection is permanent, indissoluble, and real. And

God the Saviour rejoices over the vessels of His mercy, which He hath afore prepared for glory, as the crown and recompense of all His humiliation and suffering on the earth.

The man in Christ has *a certain inheritance of future glory*. God hath laid up for his enjoyment, such things as it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. The personal happiness and peace of his future inheritance, is a precious aspect of it in his view. But this is not the peculiar one, which we now regard. Its elevation and glory constitute the aspect which we here consider, as an element of honour. It will be a glorious triumph. The Christian is made more than a conqueror. All enemies are put in subjection under his feet. Having been kept faithful unto death, he is now the possessor of a crown of life. It will be an exalted dominion. "Ye shall sit upon thrones."—"Ye shall reign as kings."—"To him that overcometh, will I give to sit with me on my throne, even as I also have overcome, and have sat down with my Father on His throne." It will be a glorious priesthood for worship and praise. He is one of a royal priesthood;—made a king and a priest unto God, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ. This future triumphant glory is an eternal glory. And while the countenance of the Father shines upon him with unutterable peace, and the presence of the Son fills his soul with overflowing joy, and the Spirit breathes through him, the influence of holy satisfaction and delight;—all this is an everlasting inheritance. And oh, what excelling glory is this!

The last enemy conquered,—the last distress passed,—the last temptation overcome,—the last tear of sorrow wiped away ;—and the spirit,—trembling with the mingling power of humility and joy,—receiving a crown from the Saviour's hand, surrounded with choirs of rejoicing angels,—welcomed in public audience of all who have rejected and despised him before,—listens with rapture and amazement, while voice after voice takes up the anthem of praise, and the far distant throngs of God's elect, unite in the transporting shout, like the noise of many thunders, "Such honour have all His saints." And all this is not a future, possible glory, merely. It is a present, actual inheritance of the child of God ; for which he is kept, and which is kept for him, because he is in Christ. It is not a recompense of his own personal, partial works, nor made contingent upon any ability in himself. It is the crown of a Saviour's merit and excellence, with whom he is one by the gift and power of grace ; and of which, therefore, he is a partaker, simply because he is in Christ. It does not depend upon his own power to overcome. It is secured by the faithfulness of a Lord, who hath already overcome in his behalf ; and who gives to His servant whom He hath chosen, the kingdom which He hath merited and obtained. The man who is in Christ, is even now, in possession of an indisputable title to this glory, and is an actual partaker of the honour which its greatness and worth imparts.

These are some views of the honour of this condition of grace. How blessed and precious

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they are, the children of God can readily understand. The influence which they exercise upon them is most evident and powerful. They lead the man in Christ, to an utter disesteem of earth as an inheritance, and of his own character as a ground of hope. When he is elevated, under the dominion of a spiritual mind, to consider these glorious privileges as his own inheritance, the things of this world fade in the distance, to total insignificance, as an object of pursuit. All supposed excellence of his own seems completely annihilated. What is man, as considered in himself, when he is viewed in this connection, but a thing of nought, passing away as a shadow? These blessed privileges lead the man in Christ to an affectionate choice of God, as his only desirable treasure. He cheerfully counts all things but loss for His sake. He has no higher wish than to follow the Lord only and forever, who hath enriched him with such boundless mercies, and made him the heir of such inconceivable and eternal glory. He rejoices to acknowledge his crucified Lord, before all men, as the one object of his desire and choice;—to appear on earth as His servant;—to bear His beloved name in all his intercourse with the world; and never to be ashamed of His cross, or of any of the reproaches which it may bring upon him.

The sons of God are thus led ever to confide in the Father's assured divine presence and protection, with a filial spirit;—to trust all their wants and cares completely to him;—and thus to be cheerful amidst sorrows, confident under the presence of difficulties, hoping even against hope,

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rejoicing ever in the assurance of the rest,—the glorious rest, which remaineth for the people of God. It is thus, that they are upheld and saved. The more entirely they walk by faith in things unseen, the more elevated and tranquil their spirits become. When their minds and hearts are brought down, to mingle in the conflicts, and to be anxious for the cares of this present world, they are twisted and overthrown, by the whirlwinds of passion, or appetite, or pride. When they look above and beyond the world, and realize their privileges in Christ, earthly things cease to distress them. While they walk closely and humbly with God, in the spirit of dependance, watchfulness, and faith,—however they may be reproached and outcast among men, they feel themselves exalted completely above them, and glory in the shame which they suffer for a beloved Lord.

Beloved friends in Christ, this is your privilege, your purchased right. O realize the blessing of keeping and cultivating a heavenly mind!—of maintaining an abiding sense of your actual relation to the Lord Jesus, and of walking simply and humbly in the enjoyment of His love. In this honour which you receive in the chosen family of God, Christ is all. It comes to you, as the purchase of His obedience, and from your personal union with Him. It depends upon His all-sufficient merit and power to save you. It is perceived and enjoyed, as He is himself embraced, remembered, and enjoyed by you. Its enjoyment is the work within you, of that Divine Spirit, who is ever ready to sanctify, uphold, and bless

you ; and whose office it is, to form Christ in your hearts, as your chief object of affection, and your only ground of hope, and to reveal to you, His excellence, power and love, as your own Redeemer and Lord. Strive then daily, to walk worthy of this high calling, as becometh saints ; in all points of duty and labour, pleasing Him who hath called you to a knowledge of His truth and His salvation.

Yea, all of you, to whom these blessed invitations come, seek to participate in the same abounding provisions of grace. If you will fly with an humbled and broken heart, to Him, in whom all these bounties dwell, as the chosen treasure of your hearts, and the one object of your desire and affection, they become yours forever. Secure an interest in the Lord Jesus, and you secure every thing in Him. Believe, trust in Him with all your hearts, and He becomes eternally your own. When you are one with Him, by this simple trust of your souls to Him, through the power of His own Holy Spirit, you are in possession of all the treasures which reside in Him for His people,—of all the joys which flow out from Him to the heirs of His salvation,—of all the glories which are laid up for them at His right hand forever. O refuse not Him that speaketh in invitations and offers like these ! While in amazing reconciliation to the guilty, He comes to you ; in reciprocal reconciliation to Him, kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the right way. If His wrath be kindled, yea, but a little, blessed are all they who put their trust in Him.

CHAPTER VIII.

RESPONSIBILITY.

WE have considered the man in Christ as occupying a position of peculiar honour. But there can be no elevation in the condition of man, without its corresponding obligations and responsibility. The man who is exalted in privileges in any walk or line of human life, will also find himself distinguished by attending and proportionate cares and duties. This is also the condition of the man in Christ. He is highly exalted in the union which he has received with his glorious Lord, and he has a peculiar, and most important measure of responsibility resting upon him, corresponding with this high measure of advantage and exaltation.

The *responsibility* of his condition, is the view to which I would direct your notice, in my present remarks. There is a mutual responsibility to each other, inseparable from the condition of men. In whatever station in human life, a man may be placed, there are always others, in a greater or less degree, made in the Divine Providence, dependant upon him; and he is bound to exercise the influence which is committed to him, for their permanent benefit. He is therefore held

accountable in this measure, for the happiness and security of their present and future condition. And his own final happiness is to a great extent, wrapped up in his faithful discharge of his obligations to them. The man in Christ has all the various personal relations of human life to sustain towards others, according to the peculiar outward circumstances in which he is placed. And besides these, he has a peculiar responsibility resting upon himself, arising from the particular blessings which he has received from God, and the special means and opportunities of influence which he possesses. He is one of a community of persons, whom God has set up as the light of the world, and upon whom He has made the everlasting salvation of their fellow-men, in a great degree dependant. They have been constituted vessels of special mercy; and in the exercise of their duty towards others, the excellency of the power is of God, and not of themselves. The responsibility of the world's salvation is devolved upon them, as the chosen and appointed instruments of God, commissioned for this important end. They are in possession of intelligence which is able to make men wise unto salvation,—which can impart consolation in every human trial, and bind up and comfort the broken heart, in every condition of human sorrow. If they are faithful in duty, men are saved by the divine blessing upon their efforts. If they are slothful and negligent in their appointed work, much suffering and loss must ensue to others from their neglect. These important facts constitute a measure of responsibility which they cannot avoid, and which rests,

and must rest, upon every individual member of this community.

In considering this responsibility of the man in Christ, I would remark first, upon *the things for which he is responsible*; the actual substance and facts of this responsibility. These may be profitably divided into the two points, of personal example, and active efforts to do good to others.

The man in Christ is responsible for his *personal example*. After all the privileges we have seen in his possession, the mercies, and the means of influence, which have been bestowed upon him, it is hardly possible unduly to magnify the demands which may be justly made upon him, for a personally holy example. The Saviour connects the exhibition of these great privileges, with the influence which ought naturally and properly to result from them. He teaches us, in many different forms, the relative position which his followers were designed by him to occupy, in reference to the world around them. He calls them, "The light of the world,"—"The salt of the earth,"—"The leaven which is to leaven the whole lump." These and similar expressions point to the fact, of a necessary operation of their character and conduct upon other persons. A light cannot be hidden, and is not brought to be put under a bushel. Salt that has lost its savour, is good for nothing. Such expressions display this purpose of relative influence as the chief design of their peculiar condition among men. For the exercise of this influence, they are endowed with many instruments and gifts, which under the blessing of God may be made thus effective.

But among them all, probably none is more likely to be powerful, than a holy example. The word of God has established a standard, and revealed a pattern, for the character of every Christian, in the perfect excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ. To this, every disciple of Christ is to be conformed, by the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. And according to its principles and demands, will he be judged and approved at last before God. His personal conformity to Christ, is the example which he must exhibit before men. The life of the Lord Jesus must be manifested in his life. The facts which make up this example will be found to extend into the most secret and constant cultivation of the mind of Christ within. Even there, as the only source of holy influence upon others, is he to acquire and maintain, that holy and spiritual mind which is life and peace. His external, open conduct also comes under this requisition for personal example. What the man in Christ really is, he is abroad in his whole intercourse with the world in which he dwells. The transactions of his daily business will be sanctified by the uniform and evident influence of a religious and holy temper. There can be no stain of insincerity, or unfaithfulness, or unreasonable anger, or inconsistent levity, or sensual impurity allowed or excused in him. He is a living epistle, to be known and read of all men, every day. And if he does not bear with him the marks of the Lord Jesus, in his free and unpremeditated walk and character among men, it cannot be, but they will disbelieve the profession which he makes, and blaspheme the holy name

whereby he is called. His domestic habits must also be included within the range of his personal example. Here also, is he examined with an habitual, and very searching eye. And he cannot lay aside the watchfulness of his walk with God, because he has returned to the retirement of his own house. As a general rule, the standard of his manifest conduct will be the standard of family judgment in regard to the whole claims of personal religion, and for the formation of religious character in all who come after him in lower stations of the household. In this aspect of his character, he will see himself reflected in multiplying mirrors around him; and he cannot be too scrutinizing or guarded in the control of himself at home. His own private and personal actions, even to the secret engagements of his closet, will be a part of his example. The character of a Christian is an unbroken unit. To be effective, it must be always thus. If he relax his line of duty in any point, he has broken the principle which professedly controls him. He has a right to uniform independence of the false and harsh judgments of the world. But he can have no dispensing power or privilege, in reference to the claims of the divine character and truth. By the demands of these he must be seen to be habitually governed. And as secretly as the eye of any human being can follow him, is he to consider the claims and the responsibility of his personal example to extend. Even the temper and habit of his mind, the manifest state and current of his thoughts and feelings, will come also under this head of personal example. Indeed, it may be

justly said, that this is the main fact of example. He will be daily and habitually judged by the sincerity with which he manifestly acts, and the evident freedom and unconstrained exhibition of his religious character. The Saviour was obliged to say, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of," to some who had forsaken all to follow him. Alas! how often do we feel such a rebuke to be justly applicable to ourselves! What strange fire do we often bring to the Lord's altar! What selfish and careless hands do we often lay upon the ark of God! And though God may mercifully pardon our infirmities, and heal our backslidings, and hide his face from our transgressions; we may not reasonably expect anything of men, but that our failures will be remembered, far more accurately and permanently, than any efforts subsequently to amend them. All these points are necessarily included in the responsibility for personal example. Whether the man in Christ be a man of prayer, of meekness, of tenderness, of love, is a subject for the judgment of others around him;—one upon which their unceasing scrutiny will be fixed, and in reference to which their opinions will very generally be according to truth.

This personal example, must be one of positive agency for good, and not merely negatively harmless. It is not enough to ask of the man in Christ, that he do no harm to others, either in his conversation, or his conduct. He is to be actually useful, to all with whom he is connected in life, to the utmost extent of his means and power. The life and spirit of true religion are habitually active

in their influence. The Gospel is in the world as a conquering dispensation. It is to gain over to obedience and subjection to the Son of God, many whose hearts are naturally alienated from Him. And the influence of its real subjects and professors, is the great instrument in the power of the Holy Spirit in carrying out these victories of the truth of God. Each single Christian becomes therefore personally responsible, for all the influence which his own example can be made to produce in the attainment of this all-important end. Thus God designs to bless and save the world. If but a single Christian be resident in a household, he is there by God's appointment, as an instrument and messenger of the Lord of Hosts; and he must be about his Master's business, and make it his meat and drink to do His will. His personal example is one of the most important facts in the daily history of that family, and will constitute one of the most serious items in the account which shall be required both of him and them. Sad will it be for him, if those who are most intimate with him, have never known, by the actual, manifest character of his life, that he was standing truly on the Lord's side, and gathering daily with Christ. What he might have been the instrument of accomplishing, had his light been shining steadily and clearly before men, he has not only lost, but it is vain for him to calculate. The hour of mourning will come over privileges and means so unreasonably neglected and unimproved. And the measure of his privileges, and his possible attainments, will be made the measure of responsibility for him. This responsibility for

personal example can never be laid aside. Wherever the man in Christ may be,—though but a wayfaring man tarrying for the night, this burden is laid upon him, and his example must and will operate, either for good, or for evil, to an extent, which will only be revealed to him at the judgment seat of Christ. O that all who belong to Jesus, might be led to reflect habitually and seriously, upon this undoubted fact; and feel the weight of that inevitable influence, which they must exercise upon others, and the responsibility which they must consequently bear. Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

The man in Christ is responsible *for personal efforts to do good to others*, with whom the Providence of God has been pleased to connect him. He has a divine and precious treasure committed to his charge. And however earthen and worthless may be the vessel which contains it, the excellency of the power is of God. He can do much for the divine glory, and the happiness of man; and he is answerable for all that he can do. His efforts for the welfare of others, will require a real and deep interest in their condition. As he thinketh in his heart, so is he. He must feel for their necessities and dangers. He must have a clear perception of the need, and the nature of their salvation. God must be able to witness how ardently he longs for them all, in the love of the Lord Jesus. In this deep concern for their spiritual benefit, as well as for their present happiness, he must feel himself, and show himself, to

be perfectly sincere. Such an interest will speak in habitual prayer. He knows God to be one that heareth prayer. He has been accustomed to receive, and to understand, manifest answers from God, to prayer. He will therefore abide in his calling upon God, with watchfulness, earnestness, and perseverance. He will be much engaged in intercessory prayer,—pleading for all saints, for the whole household of God; for all earthly friends; for those who have declared themselves enemies to him; for the world which lieth in sin. Daily will his supplications rise up to God, in affectionate intercessions, for those whom he is bid thus to remember before God, in the assurance that praying breath can never be spent in vain. But this active spirit of prayer will lead to a habit of effort just as active. The man in Christ will learn to be ingenious in devising methods of spiritual benefit to others. Affectionate religious conversation, directing and suggesting to a profitable course of reading, leading to the faithful preaching of the Gospel, as Andrew found his own brother Simon, and brought him to hear the Saviour whom he had previously seen,—all these are very familiar, and very effective instruments of religious benefit. How much a feeble Christian may in this way, by the divine blessing, accomplish for the benefit of his fellow-men, and the glory of his Redeemer, none can adequately describe. A sincere and believing heart, in faithful prayer, and earnest Christian effort, is attended with an omnipotent divine power. And by the most feeble of such instruments, God habitually accomplishes very great results.

But the man in Christ, will go farther than the mere employment of these instruments of benefit to man. He will rejoice to dedicate his money, and to devote his time, to the great purpose of saving the souls of men. All that he possesses, he realizes to be God's gracious gift, or rather God's confiding loan to him; and he acknowledges the obligation to dispense it, according to the rules which God has himself prescribed. He sees how much the cause of true benevolence languishes among men, in want of the efforts which those whom God hath redeemed and prospered, should put forth for Him. He feels, therefore, the more bound, to do all that he can, to promote and encourage every good work. It is with him a fixed principle of faith, that the world in which he dwells, is the property, and will be ultimately under the dominion, of the Redeemer whom he loves and serves. As this is a subject of divine promise, so is it with him a subject of habitual, joyful expectation. To hasten the fulfilment of this promise, and to accomplish to the utmost of his power, the glorious result which it proclaims, is the purpose of his heart, and the object of his cheerful and persevering exertions in every path of influence which may be laid open to him. He waits for and desires the coming of his great God and Saviour, according to the Lord's command; and labours in his vocation, to have the Gospel preached unto all nations, as the appointed antecedent to this glorious manifestation of his Lord. The responsibility for the faithful discharge of this duty, the man in Christ continually realizes. And as he looks round upon his own ad-

vantages, upon the means of influence committed to him, and the wonderful mercies and blessings which God has been pleased to bestow upon him ; he cannot but remember, and feel, that for all these things God will bring him into judgment. And he accustoms himself to make a serious and solemn estimate of the final account which he must be prepared to give to God.

But *to whom* is the man in Christ responsible ? How shall he except any ? His character and influence are the property and the right of others ; and they may justly claim, all that he is bound by the divine commands to impart. He is responsible to the family with whom he dwells, and whatever may be his station in the household, every member of it has a just claim to a divine blessing through him ; and will meet him in the presence of the heart-searching God at last, to settle the record of the mercies which they have received or lost, in their connection with him. He is responsible to the church in which he has been planted by the providence and grace of God. His character, and exertions, and influence are a portion of the property of this spiritual body, in which God has ingrafted him. If he sins in an inconsistent walk, the church is dishonoured. If he shines in manifest holiness, the church is advanced. It is his duty and privilege to edify the body of Christ, and to fulfil his portion of the great work, which God has assigned to his church upon the earth. What other Christians think of him, and say of him—if the estimate which they form of his character, and the record which they give of his life be just—is a fact of vast consequence

to him. He is also responsible to the world around him. God has placed him there, as a light shining in a dark place. All that he can do for the happiness and salvation of mankind, they have a right to expect from him. He must by all means save some. With them also he must stand in judgment. For them, he must answer before God. The perishing souls of sinful men have a right to his care, and time, and thoughts. Their desolate and ruined condition claims his pity and his help. And though it is a small thing for him to be judged of man's judgment; it is not a small thing to be judged before God, for the neglect of that which he was bound to do for the salvation of men, by the divine appointment. But amidst all this intermediate responsibility, he is finally accountable to God. All previous facts are but a gathering of the materials for this last account. There, before the tribunal of the Living God, he will be seen, and known, and thoroughly understood. All that he has done, and all that he has left undone, will come out in equal clearness before him. And according as he has sown upon the earth, must he reap an harvest for eternity. His life has been the evidence of his character, and will be the standard of his account. He has been enriched with amazing privileges, and God must require of him, according to that which he hath received. And though his glorious recompense is wholly the reward of a Saviour's perfect work of obedience for him; though his crown is merited by that everlasting righteousness which is imputed to him without his works; his own conduct and character are the proofs that he is really a

partaker of that work of merit, and a possessor of that righteousness, which has purchased for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

This is the responsibility of the man who is in Christ. Let all those who believe this to be their condition, realize the importance of the view which we have now taken of it. As you have considered the various pleasing attitudes of this state of grace, so now make it your solemn purpose to realize and appropriate the serious and impressive responsibility which belongs to it. Let it be the labour of your life to fill up the measure of this responsibility, remembering how short your time is. You cannot be too active in effort, or too devoted in spirit, or too zealous in affection and plan, to comport with the high vocation wherewith you are called. You have professed to give up all for Christ, and to make Him your treasure, and your portion. O hold not back any thing which belongs to Him ! So serve Him, and so follow Him, in newness of mind, and holiness of life, that you may honour Him in your daily walk on earth, and rejoice before Him, at His glorious coming, with the multitude of His redeemed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIFE OF FAITH.

It has been my object to view the man in Christ in this special connection ;—to consider the blessings which he derives, and the duties for which he is responsible, from the simple, but all-important fact, that he is in Christ. In every aspect under which his character and condition may be considered, every benefit that he enjoys is made dependant upon the Saviour's grace, and flowing continually from His good pleasure,—Christ is all. He has received a real and everlasting union with Christ, the gift of the Father's love, and the result of the immediate agency of the Holy Ghost. In this work of divine mercy, he has been transformed in the renewing of his mind, subdued in the yielding of his will to the commands of God, enlightened to follow after heavenly treasures, elevated to desire and seek the things which are above, drawn to unfeigned and ardent love for the Saviour, and made cheerfully and thankfully ready to submit himself completely to Him. He has thus given up all attempts to establish any righteousness of his own, and has submitted himself with gratitude and confidence, to the righteousness of God. He has received Christ, both

as a Sovereign and a Saviour. He acknowledges to Him as a Sovereign, that he has no claim or righteousness of his own;—no reason in himself why mercy should be extended to him;—that he is justly condemned under the sentence of His law, and therefore has no merit whatever to plead in His presence; and that he must rely upon the perfect freeness of His pardoning grace for every hope. He depends upon Him as a Saviour, who has fulfilled the righteousness of the law for him, and is ready to bestow His whole work of merit upon him. He relies, therefore, for all his hope, upon the actual humiliation, obedience, and triumph, perfected by Christ for him;—and trusts himself before God to be tried and sentenced, with no other plea than this perfect work of Jesus, as a Saviour, upon which he rests with simple and affectionate faith. He thus yields to the righteousness of the law's demands, though it utters his certain condemnation,—and accepts the righteousness of the Gospel's provision, as furnishing the only, and a complete redemption for his soul. He exalts the sovereignty of God, in confessing himself, like clay in the hands of the potter, dependant upon His absolute will; and he exalts the salvation of God, by trusting himself unreservedly to its sufficiency and provision for him.

The single principle of his spiritual life, is therefore *faith*; an unhesitating belief of the words of God, and an entire reliance upon the merit and power of Christ. It is a faith, which is of the operation of God; an inward imparted perception and apprehension of the unchangeable redeeming

love of God for him, which enables him to hope, and to rejoice in hope, notwithstanding the abiding sin which he still perceives within himself. He has thus received Jesus Christ the Lord, and he thus walks in Him. The living principle of his progressive course, is faith, which gives present substance to things hoped for, and is the assuring evidence of the things which are not seen. The man in Christ walks by faith, not by sight. In total despair of ever finding any good thing in himself, or of his own, or of becoming any better qualified by efforts of his own, for the exercise upon him of a Saviour's love,—he commits his soul, his present and eternal welfare, entirely and unreservedly to Christ; both to guide him in this world, and to save him in the next; believing that He is both able and willing to do the whole work for him, in the freedom and fulness of His grace.

This trust in Christ, is the abiding motive and principle of the man in Christ. It is the very opposite of mere worldly prudence. The children of this world walk by sight, not by faith. To them the visible possession of a smaller gain, is better than the possible acquisition of a larger. But the Christian's treasures are all unseen. He has nothing in visible possession. The earnest of his promised inheritance is the renewing and love-working faith, which the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon him, and maintains within him. And his whole walk, his uniform course of character, is a life of faith,—not faith in man, which is mere imagination, and is doomed with a curse,—but faith in God,—in the word of God; in the

feeling and mind of God towards himself; and in the purposes and plans of God in relation to him. This is the view which I desire to take now of the man in Christ.—He walks by faith.

It is faith *in the divine provisions for the pardon of the past*. There is nothing in past life which awakens anxiety, or which need inspire concern, but sin. The troubles which have been encountered, and the sorrows which have been endured, have passed away, and are readily forgotten. But sin invariably leaves a sting, which harasses the mind, disturbs the conscience, and sooner or later awakens the deepest and most distressing grief. Unless this be pardoned, man is without hope forever. Unless man has some intelligence or knowledge of its forgiveness, it is impossible for him to be at peace. The fear of punishment, and the confidence in pardon, are necessary alternatives in an awakened and considerate mind. Nor can man rest, until he has some good reason to believe that God is really reconciled to him, and willing to receive and bless him. For the evidence of this important fact, the man in Christ rests upon the certainty of the divine word. God has provided and revealed a full atonement for sin in the offering of His Son. He has received Him as manifested in the flesh, a sufficient substitute and surety for guilty man. The Father has accepted His offering once for all, when the iniquities of men were laid upon Him, and He bore them in His own body upon the cross,—being made a ransom for them, a sacrifice instead of them. There is in this amazing provision of divine mercy and grace, a perfect sufficiency for

guilty man. It is unquestionable that the blood of Jesus Christ,—God manifest in the flesh,—is able to cleanse him from all sin. There is a dignity, and worth, and power, in His mediation, in this peculiar attitude, as an offering for man, which furnishes the clearest and most sufficient ground for hope. Upon this, the man in Christ rests his confidence of pardon. He believes the testimony which proclaims this work of divine love; and commits himself, as a consciously condemned sinner, to its all-sufficient worth as a means of divine forgiveness for him. There is in this system of grace, not only sufficiency, but adaptation also to his wants and condition. It is a plan which is perfectly suited to his case; which precisely meets the demands of his soul. What the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, has perfectly finished. And while the Christian contemplates this suffering, mighty Saviour, as actually bearing the burden of man's condemnation, and putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself; he perceives it to be a plan, which precisely meets every need of his soul. It furnishes every thing in which he is deficient, and in just the way, most suited to his necessities, and most adapted to relieve and comfort him. Upon the certainty of this provision, as made and proclaimed by the God of Truth, he rests himself in humble faith. It is all that he wants. He casts his burden of conscious guilt upon this suffering Lord, and is at peace. His evidence, his reason for believing, is the truth and certainty of the word of God, who cannot lie.

The object upon which his faith rests, is this revealed Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. In the view and plans which this faith forms and acknowledges, Christ is all. To intrust himself to this all-sufficient Saviour, he does not wait for evidences within himself,—the fruits and effects of faith upon himself. He does not make his own state of mind and feeling, the reason for his confidence in Christ. This would be confidence in himself, not in Christ. There are many blessed results of faith, in the comforting and upholding of the soul, which are subsequent proofs that the Christian does really believe, not reasons why he should believe; and which can only come when he has actually committed himself entirely in simple faith to Christ. And it is an ensnaring temptation, which often leads men, to seek for these effects of faith, as a ground of confidence and hope, rather than the mere truth and fidelity of God. The man in Christ lives and walks by faith, not by the fruits of faith. He comes as an ungodly man,—a sinner against God; without seeing any thing in himself but sin; neither feeling nor finding any thing in his own heart and nature, but hardness, deadness, ignorance, and rebellion; and casts his soul for time and for eternity, on the revealed and sole sufficiency of an offered Saviour,—on the free grace of God in Him, having and desiring to have, no other ground of confidence, than the covenant faithfulness of God, the indubitable certainty of His word. This never-failing faithfulness of God proves a strong consolation—an anchor to his soul, both sure and steadfast,—whatever difficulties and storms

may arise to overturn his hope. Confiding in this, he looks upon God, as a pardoning God; and staggers not in unbelief, in approaching Him and resting upon Him, as thus passing by his transgressions, and multiplying His pardons upon him, for the Saviour's sake. He finds himself saved in this resting of his soul upon God, and obtains increased strength in this quietness and confidence in Him. Thus he walks by faith in the divine provisions of grace for the pardon of his sin, and the acceptance of his soul with God. Being justified by faith, he has peace with God, through Jesus Christ the Lord.

It is *faith in the divine protection for the security of the present*. The solemn promise has been given, that all things shall work together for good, to those who love God. In the assurance of the truth of this promise, the man in Christ rests, with simple and entire confidence. He realizes the presence of an unseen, Almighty God,—a living present Saviour and Friend,—who is about his path, and spieth out all his ways. The simple dependance of his soul upon the divine promise and presence, settles all possible anxiety about his outward, temporal concerns. In the degree in which he is enabled to exercise it, he comes boldly to the throne of grace, feeling able in every condition to say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do to me.” There is in his mind, an assurance of an all-sufficient and all-controlling Providence, whose never-failing power orders all things both in heaven and earth. It is a Providence which has a special reference to the vessels of divine mercy, the heirs of salvation.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He can with sincere affection and confidence, say of the Lord, "He is my refuge, and my fortress; my God: in Him will I trust." He is therefore without carefulness; but in every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, he makes known his requests unto God. His filial faith in divine protection answers every anxious question and concern of his soul. It covers all the possible contingencies of human life, and keeps him in perfect peace, while his mind is stayed on God. Whatever persecutions arise, and whatever sorrows press him,—whatever he may be required to lose, or to bear,—there is an unseen power ever at hand, going with him through the waters, and through the fire, making even enemies at peace with him, and bringing light out of darkness in his path. This faith is the grand practical principle of his life. It brings every event into a direct connection with a gracious ruling Lord. It constitutes every hour and place, as a time and occasion of spiritual worship. It enables him in every thing to give thanks. Though all present appearances may be against him, it leads him forward with confidence to an approaching hour, when the ways of God shall be made plain, and he shall receive the full reward of the faith in which he has endured;—an hour in which not only his Benjamin and Simeon shall be restored, but his long lost Joseph also shall be found again;—when God shall render him consolations double for all his trials, and his present light af-

flition shall bring out its far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

The same spirit of faith quiets also his inward conflicts, by presenting before him the assured upholding, renewing, and sanctifying power of the Spirit of God, as the Saviour's covenanted gift to him. He has been enabled to cast himself entirely upon the power of a Saviour, whose promises of sufficient grace are all bestowed upon him; and he is confident that He is able to perfect the work which He has begun within His servant's soul, and to keep that which His servant has committed unto Him, unto the great day. The Christian thus feels himself kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation ready to be revealed in God's own appointed time. In the exercise of this faith, there are many conflicts to be endured, and many objections to be encountered. Sin,—too frequently indulged and conscious sin,—not loved, desired, or wilful sin,—rises up in a thousand shapes in the soul, to unsettle its confidence, and overturn its hope. But faith enables the man in Christ to see himself accepted in the Beloved; and still to rejoice in the assurance of divine acceptance, though he find much to war with in himself. He sees that God regards him not as he is in himself, but as he is in Christ; and accepts him not for his own merit, but for the perfect righteousness of Christ. He confides in God as a faithful God, keeping His promises forever. He thus finds strength for waiting upon Him, for contending with every corruption of his own nature, and for cleaving closely and humbly to Him. Thus faith in divine protec-

tion overcomes all the arts of the adversary, keeps the soul in peace in the midst of its inward trials, and makes the man in Christ to rejoice in the assurance of the Lord's goodness and favour to him. It is in this operation the principle of new obedience, and the fountain of holiness in the heart. While it is maintained, love, joy, peace, and every virtue flow out from it. If it can be undermined, and God be no longer regarded with confidence and affection,—but with fear and distrust,—every fruit of the Spirit in the life and temper fades and dies. The Christian walks in holiness, only in the degree in which he walks in faith. It is this faith which brings him and keeps him in union with his Lord, and thus overcomes the world around, and purifies the heart within. Resting every thing concerning him without and within, upon the covenanted protection and acceptance of a faithful God, his path is a path of conquest and of peace; and he cheerfully presses forward to the hour, when he shall receive the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul.

It is *faith in the divine promises, for the comfort of the future*. The man in Christ is a man of strong and precious anticipations. Whatever may be his present condition of blessing and comfort, he looks constantly forward for far better things to come, than he now enjoys. But all his hopes are regulated by the divine promises, and are resting upon them. In the concerns of the present life, these promises cover all his necessities and cares. He can be placed in no condition, which God has not already prepared, and for which He has not already made provision. As he looks for-

ward to days to come, he seeks not great things for himself; and all things which are necessary for life and for godliness, God has promised to supply, out of the riches of His grace and glory in Christ Jesus. Bread shall be given him, and his water shall be sure. His Heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of all these things before he asks Him. This faith in the certainty and sufficiency of the divine promises, keeps him free from distracting cares for his future time; and enables him to commit to his Holy and Almighty Helper, every want and every fear, as it arises to his mind. How precious and comforting he finds this simple confidence in the divine provisions! He presses forward in the path of apparent duty, leaving all results to Him, who watches about his path, and spieth out all his ways,—and who, when He has tried him, shall bring him forth as gold. Clouds may arise over his transient prospects,—darkness may endure for the night,—but light is sure to spring up for him from its thickest glooms, and joy cometh in the morning. In all these anticipations, he walks by faith. God has spoken to him, in every variety of shape of illustration;—uttering promise upon promise;—filling up His sacred word with blessed assurances of providing mercy, upon which he hath caused his heart to rest. Each of these promises, to whomsoever among the servants of God, they may have been particularly, originally addressed, he feels a right to appropriate to himself:—they belong to all the servants of God, who are in the circumstances, to which they are adapted. They are like blanks already signed

and sealed, in which each man in Christ, by a faith which embraces them, and gives them reality for him, writes his own name, and thus uses them, and walks in perfect confidence of their fulfilment to him.

But these divine promises reach far beyond the present life. God has laid up for His people, in a future and unseen world, such glories as pass man's understanding. There is a crown of life, a crown of righteousness,—a kingdom which cannot be removed,—an inheritance which fadeth not away. These, and more than these, are secured by the gracious promises of God, to those who first trust in Christ. They are all the reward of a Saviour's merit, and the purchase of a Saviour's obedience. They are the gifts of grace to all who believe in Him. The hope with which the man in Christ embraces and enjoys them, is founded entirely upon the gracious power and fidelity of this Glorious Saviour. Confiding in His exceeding great and precious promises,—resting upon His all-sufficient and justifying righteousness,—the Christian strong in faith, looks forward without fear, to an eternal world before him. Whatever earthly hopes may fail, and whatever griefs the disappointments of earth may bring, these heavenly promises abide secure. Not one word can pass from them, until all be fulfilled. The assurance of this keeps the mind in peace, and awakens the purest and liveliest joy, in the expectation of the hour when mortality shall be swallowed up of life; and man in the perfect possession of eternal glory, shall need the support of promises no more. In this walk of faith, in the divine prom-

ises,—to live, is Christ, and to die, will be gain. And as faith thus brings to the soul, and prepares for its enjoyment, forgiveness for the past, and protection for the present,—so it also completely and securely provides, all comfort and abounding consolation for the future.

These three operations of faith may be considered as comprising the principles of the walk of the man in Christ. By the one he embraces the Gospel, as the fountain of all his consolations. By another, he applies this Gospel in its blessed provisions of grace, to his daily recurring present wants. By the third, he expects and waits for the fulfilment of all its promises and provisions for him, in a future world of glory. The one answers all the questions of the awakened conscience under the burden of unconverted guilt. The other meets all the difficulties of a passing mortal life. The third consoles and removes all the infirmities and fears which conscious sin produces. The one assuages the griefs which memory creates from the records of the past. The other tranquillizes the anxieties which present endurance calls up from the facts now passing. The third sustains the heart in the anticipations which spring from the unknown futurity. In the employment of them all, the man in Christ walks by faith,—stands by faith,—and overcomes by faith, in his journey to a Father's home. These are the principles of practical truth, and of spiritual strength, which I have desired to press upon the notice and acceptance of my readers, in these pages. Happy is the man who understands and employs them. They open a free, consistent,

rational, and adequate path to eternal life, making Christ to be all for guilty man, and showing the actual present connection of Christ with His redeemed in the work of their personal salvation. O that every mind that has passed with me through the consideration of them, might be led in simple affectionate confidence to Him, as all the salvation, and all the desire of the lost.

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRITUAL CALL.

THE great privileges, and responsibilities, and principles of the condition of the man in Christ, we have already considered. Let us now meditate upon the method of grace, by which the Holy Spirit has brought him into this exalted and blessed state. Of his own will, God was pleased to beget him with the word of truth; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever. In Christ Jesus he has been begotten again through the Gospel; the influence and operation of which Gospel upon him, in this work of divine salvation, I wish in some measure to trace.

The influence of the Gospel upon man in its publication, is twofold. There is a general call of the Gospel, by which all sinful men are invited to become partakers of the grace of Christ; and there is a particular, personal call, by which each real believer is made individually interested in the mercies, the offer of which is thus generally proposed. The first of these, the general call, may be found expressed in such passages of Holy Scripture as the following: "Ho, every one that

thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”—“ Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.”—“ If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.”—“ Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.” This call of mercy is unlimited in its application to men. It is addressed to all the members of an alienated race, and to all with equal freedom. It is permanent in the opportunity which it opens to mankind ; going from generation to generation, and abiding among men, as the recorded message of divine compassion to their perishing souls. It is continually and frequently repeated ; not only to mankind as a race, in their successive generations, but also to individual men, in the brief history of their lives. In every page of Holy Scripture which is opened to the eye ;—in every proclamation of the word of God which is addressed to the ear ; the warnings, offers, and invitations of the Gospel are again presented to the notice of men, and they are urged to consider and to obey them. Men are thus placed entirely beyond excuse in a sinful and unpardoned state, because they willingly, and with determination, reject an offer of reconciliation from God, which is perfectly cleared from all difficulties, and precisely adapted to their condition and wants. And yet vast multitudes do reject this offer of mercy, and abide by their own choice in a state of condemnation and death.

But there is a second, personal call of the Gospel, which is addressed immediately to the indi-

vidual soul, to whom the message comes. It is a secret, silent appeal of the Holy Spirit; his employment of the Gospel, uttered to the conscience and the heart within, with no other witness to His presence or design. It is an effective and constraining appeal, coming not in word only, but with power; selecting its appointed object, and leading and persuading him to turn from his ungodliness, and accept the offered mercies of a Saviour now revealed. This special call of the Gospel may be considered as illustrated in such passages of the Scripture as these: "When it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."—"A certain woman named Lydia, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul."—"Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power."—"Our Gospel came not unto you, in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." It was by this special personal call of the Gospel addressed to him, when he was dead in sins, and having no hope, that the man in Christ was brought to his new condition, and made to taste and experience the power of the grace of God; so that he may truly say with St. Paul, in reference to this spiritual knowledge and experience, "The Gospel which is preached of me, is not after man, for I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." To consider this special call, and the peculiar manifestation of divine power which it has made in him,

we may wisely say something first of the general invitation, from which we have separated it.

The general annunciation of the Gospel to man is in the outward message by human instruments, of the grace of God to mankind. It is a proclamation of the great facts which make up the history of man's redemption ;—of the mighty Saviour who has himself alone accomplished that redemption, by His own incarnation, obedience, and death. It declares His dignity and power, His humiliation and obedience, His substitution and sufferings for man, His triumph over death : His ascension and intercession, and future coming for His people. It announces His ability to save unto the uttermost, all who come unto God through Him, and His readiness to receive and bless all who come to Him ; and thus proclaims a finished and glorious work of salvation in Him for the chief of sinners, for all sinners, that whosoever cometh to Him may be in no wise cast out. This general message of the Gospel, the ministers of Christ are sent to proclaim. They are to announce without ceasing, the glorious fulness and sufficiency of a divine Saviour. Without limit, and with the most perfect freedom, are they to preach the sure mercies of the Lord Jesus to sinful men, and to call earnestly upon them not to receive the grace of God in vain. There is a fountain opened, and an atonement made for all the sons of men. And the needy and perishing are called from the very ends of the earth, to come and cast in their lot with Jesus, and to be partakers of His grace and His glory. Every burden has been borne for them ;

and every responsibility has been met in their behalf. All fulness is thus proclaimed in Jesus, and a fulness for all; and whosoever will, is urged to take advantage of the offered mercy. While this proclamation of the work of Christ, and of the reconciliation of God is freely made, it is impossible for man to tell, who will embrace, or who will reject the offer. According to God's command, the glad tidings are preached to every creature. The unlimited, unconditional offer of pardon is made to all who will receive the gift, and penitently turn to God and live. We know not which shall prosper, or who will obey the heavenly message. But we know that God will not leave himself without witnesses, nor fail to be glorified in the publication of His grace, nor suffer His word to return unto Him void. And therefore we sow beside all waters; and in season and out of season, preach the same word of mercy to unrighteousness, and of pardon to the guilty; assured that we shall become a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish.

But connected with this general annunciation, there has been made to the man in Christ, a *personal* application of the message of mercy to his own soul; an inward work of divine power; so that he has no more doubt by whose power he has been influenced in his course of obedience to God, than by whose power he was made at first. This is an act of divine grace and power indispensable to man's salvation. The offers of Christ were all in vain, until they were received by him as an individual message from God to himself.

His soul was made to realize and feel, its personal connection with the things which had been done by the Saviour of men. He was made to see and to acknowledge that the guilt which was laid upon Christ was his;—that the atonement which He made for sin was for him;—that the book which proclaims this boundless mercy was written for him, and addressed to him. He thus felt himself to be singled out from the residue of men, and God to be speaking to him alone, as if the whole plan of grace had been contrived and accomplished especially and solely for himself. Until he was made thus to separate himself in mind from the surrounding mass of men, and to feel that he had a special and peculiar interest in the things which he heard, all was heard in vain. The wheat while growing in the field, or the bread while lying upon the board, was no nourishment for him, however adapted and adequate to his wants. He must take it, and feed upon it, before he could gain life and health through its sustaining power. Thus did he receive the message from God,—not as a general annunciation, in which he was interested in common with others, but as a particular communication which God designed especially for himself, and which it was of the most vital consequence to him that he should hear, and understand, and believe.

This was a *secret* application of the word to him. The power which was operating in this great crisis, to write the word upon his heart, came unseen by him, and unknown to others, and called his attention secretly to the word which was set forth before him. The evidence of the

presence of the renewing Spirit, was in his consciousness of a very peculiar interest in the things which he heard. His heart within was deeply stirred. A secret conviction of his guilt arose before his view. He felt the truth of what he heard. He perceived its vast importance to himself. Views such as he never had before, were impressed upon his conscience. The eye of an heart-searching God seemed to be directly fastened upon him. There might have been crowds around, but he was alone. Deep emotions agitated his breast. His thoughts were arrested, and his judgment was swayed. The danger of his unpardoned soul appeared fearfully before him. The perfect adaptation of Christ to his wants was clearly seen. His hour of mercy had come; a door of hope was opened before him; he heard the inviting voice of God speaking to him, and his heart was at once inclined to obey. He hardly dared to procrastinate for another hour. Something within urged him,—now, to-day, harden not your heart, but hear His voice. O, it was the special call of the Holy Ghost; and though none around might see or feel that there was a shade of difference from the habitual course of facts concerning him;—he felt that every thing was changed, and a new power seemed to have arrested him, and to be leading him on. His dearest friend might be wholly ignorant of what had taken place within him. But God had entered into his very soul, and there, was arguing with himself alone, the unspeakable interests of Christ and eternity. O, what memories rose up in that wonderful hour! What fears, what doubts, what

hopes were called into being! How much of life seemed to be compressed in a space so narrow! There was a mighty power at work within him, bringing him into captivity to Christ, and making him to understand and feel, that it was not by might or power of man, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, that the human soul is turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

This secret call was the *special, personal agency of the Holy Ghost*. It was an experience and condition of the soul, in which the Divine Spirit was acting entirely alone. He had passed beyond the region of outward instruments and ministries,—of ordinances and messengers,—to take the message and the work completely into His own hands. Perhaps the sermon, or the providence, which had been made the instrument of first arousing the sinner's attention, had been quite forgotten. Some single text of Holy Scripture, it may be, alone remained in mind. The man may have been in deep retirement and solitude, away from all the agencies of an outward church;—but the Spirit, the infallible and unfailing preacher of righteousness was there; and His great power was manifested, in this secret transformation of a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction, into a vessel of mercy prepared for glory. Here was the voice of God, which breaketh the cedars. He reasoned with the sinner alone. He showed him his guilt, his ruin, and his remedy. He lifted up the cross before him, and proclaimed a free forgiveness. He removed the darkness which was spread out before his

anxious soul, and offered him abundant hope. He exhibited Christ as the perfect righteousness of the believing soul, and presented Him as a garment, and a robe of eternal glory, to the doubting, fearing sinner. He showed the power of new creation to be of God, and not of man, and urged to an immediate confidence and submission. He pressed an instant acceptance of the Gospel offer, announcing to the guilty man that God had become his salvation, and he might trust, and not be afraid. In this crisis of the life of man, every thing was brought within a narrow compass. The contest was maintained in the closest engagement. The time was short. Every thing was pressing. Eternity hung upon a single moment of life. Heaven was within his very grasp. Will the sinner *now* hear and submit? was the great question upon which his eternal interests were made dependant. Will he *now* go with a reconciled God and live? O, precious, joyful hour! God obtained the victory, captivity was led captive, and the prey was plucked from the jaws of the oppressor. This call of the Gospel was made effectual upon his heart, and guilty man was brought, humbled, pardoned, and believing, to find his all in Christ forever.

This secret, personal call of the Gospel, was to *an immediate course of duty and action*. Convictions of truth were impressed upon the conscience and judgment. Light was thrown upon the understanding. Attracting influence was exercised from heaven upon the heart. All these gifts of grace were bestowed. But now under their combined operation, man must act. The question

proposed to him, was a question for himself to settle. He was brought to a line, where the next step was final safety, and where he must either go forward in chosen, voluntary devotion, or go back in hopeless, perhaps deserted rebellion. A circle of privileges and responsibility was thus drawn around him; the accepted time, the day of salvation had come; and he must, in a conscious choice and determination, embrace the offered mercy, and render up himself a living sacrifice to God. God demanded his whole life, all that he was, and had,—as bought with an inestimable price,—to be supremely, and forever devoted to Him. He was calling him to a godly sorrow for sin, as it was now displayed to him; to a simple dedication of himself to His service and glory; to a love and confidence of his heart towards Him; to a communion and fellowship of his spirit with Him; to an habitual recognition and remembrance of Him; to an earnest and sincere effort and determination to obey Him. He was to choose and accept the Saviour now revealed, as his Master and Lord; and renouncing all other lords but Him, to make mention of His name alone, as his Ruler and his hope. God had opened before him a life of new obedience,—the fruits and product of a spiritual mind within; in which He covenanted to lead on his believing soul from strength to strength by His own Spirit, assuming the whole responsibility of blessing and protecting him, while he faithfully rested upon His word, and trusted to His power. He invited him to a life of happiness and peace in Him;—to a course of energy and faithfulness for Him;—to

a firm but successful contest with the enemies of His truth ; requiring the solemn and cheerful consecration of all his powers and hopes to Him ;—to an exalted, holy walk with Him upon the earth ;—and to an eternal inheritance with Him in the kingdom of His glory. All these invitations and arguments were not now merely recorded in the written word of truth, as they had always been, but were carried forward by the same Spirit who breathed that word, and written upon the living tables of the conscience and the heart. They were now the voice of God within himself, and he heard and obeyed it, as the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.

His acceptance of this offered mercy, and obedience to this call, brought *security* and salvation to his soul. The Holy Spirit thus placed him under a heavenly protection, interested him in an everlasting covenant, and armed him with a divine power. He was now sheltered in the hiding-place which Jesus had opened for him, and received the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul. From that hour, he has gone forward over conquered foes, under the guidance of an all-conquering and powerful Redeemer. He has been pressing on to eternal life ; a new man, transformed, regenerated, born again, and a partaker in Christ,—in whom he now dwells, and will dwell forever,—of all the glories and triumphs, of the Saviour's victory and power. In the strength of this Saviour unceasingly bestowed upon him, and exercised for him, he cheerfully bears every appointed cross, and counts nothing dear unto himself, so that he may win Christ,

and be found in Him, and finish his course with joy, magnifying his glorious Lord, whether by life or by death. This is the happy condition of the man in Christ, to which he was brought by that secret, special call of the Gospel; which was the effectual working of the power of the Spirit in his believing soul.

This special, personal call of the Gospel is *never to be trifled with*. It cannot be disregarded with safety. Instant obedience to its demand is the only course of security for man. Thus the Psalmist says, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart replied, Thy face Lord, will I seek." If you yield thus to the voice of God, and follow the guidance of His Spirit, your path is open and plain, and your hope is clear and bright. God will guide you by his counsel, and afterward receive you to his glory. But the peculiar danger and guilt of man under the privileges of the Gospel, is not only in his rejection of the general invitation which it gives; but his resistance also, of this inward, secret call. Here it is, that sinners pluck down ruin upon themselves. Let unconverted men remember this. The general intelligence of the Gospel they treat with indifference; but they do not deny, nor do they refuse to acknowledge in general terms, their own guilt of which it speaks, and their need of the sufficient Saviour whom it offers. But when the Spirit takes this message from God, and carries it home to their own consciences and hearts;—when they must consider the message as a personal matter, and can be indifferent and unmoved no longer; then they often resist the Holy Ghost, and strive

with their Maker, until God proclaims in His wrath, that they shall not enter into His rest. There are few persons under the faithful preaching of the Gospel, who are not conscious of having received some special, personal call of the Holy Ghost. Their secret sins have been made to appear before them. Their neglect of God, and of God's commands, has been presented in its aggravated aspect to their view. Their hearts and eyes have borne witness to the deep sense of sin with which they have been visited from the convincing Spirit. They have seen and acknowledged the advantages, and the obligations of the Lord's service. They have been almost persuaded to be Christians. They have been sometimes ready to arise in the very midst of the congregation, and declare their determination to follow Jesus only in time to come. The pressure upon them was very great;—God seemed to be calling them onward to a new and living path, with a power which it appeared impossible to resist. And at that very point, when apparently there wanted but another step,—a thankful, self-renouncing closing in with God's proposal of reconciliation;—an actual, affectionate grasping of the hand of kindness which God appeared to hold out to them from the heavens,—a simple yielding up of all, to follow Jesus, though in great weakness,—then they held back, till to-morrow, another time, a change of circumstances,—some expected end;—and God arose and departed from them, and they were left to themselves, perhaps to perish. O, it is a deeply critical point in the soul's history, upon which from

an eternity of sorrow, they may look back, to see with amazement, and with bitter self-condemnation, how near they were to the heavenly kingdom,—to a final peace with God,—when foolish, wicked procrastination, or sensual worldly indulgence, delayed them for a season upon the road, and shut them out from hope forever.

This secret personal call is rarely often repeated. When the Holy Spirit brings man up to this line, where nothing separates him from the Saviour, but man's own determination ;—when awakened, convinced, impressed, sensitive, and sorrowing, the Saviour stands out before him, offers to him every thing freely, and asks him to obey Him ; O, could his heart reply,—“ I will,”—could he then resolve to turn at once from every tempting opposer, and follow Jesus only, and make one sacrifice of pride, and indolence, and fear, to enter into a covenant with Christ ; the conquered enemy would depart from him. Angels would shout a Saviour's glory over another soul rescued as a brand plucked out of the fire. But if such an offer, and such grace, are rejected, the despised Spirit rarely returns. The sinner is left to be rejected in his turn. And God is vindicated, even in His mercy, when He passes judgment upon his soul.

In concluding our view of this very important subject, it will be perceived, that it presents the real interests of the soul of man, as a personal secret concern between himself and Christ. The Father has sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The Holy Spirit reveals and exalts this Son to be accepted as a Saviour to the individual man. The Saviour is thus brought into immedi-

ate connection with the sinner ;—and in the whole work of his salvation, the sinner is really alone with Christ. It is Christ personally, whom he must receive and obtain, as the life of his soul. It is Christ personally, whom he rejects, when he refuses the life which is thus offered in the Gospel. However ministries and instruments may be employed, as God shall please, in leading the sinner to Christ, and in preaching Christ to him, they are none of them indispensable in this great concern. Nay, they are worthless, but as they become completely subsidiary to this one great end of bringing Jesus, and the work of Jesus, distinctly, constantly, and really, before the sinner's view. It is not union with the outward church, by sacraments and ordinances, which is security for the soul of man. It is the inward, spiritual union of the soul by faith with Christ ; an union which is the work of the Holy Spirit within, leading the heart to believe unto righteousness ; and which is afterwards to be witnessed and proclaimed in the outward ordinances of the Gospel, as a confession unto salvation. Between the sinner and the Saviour, in this inward work, no man can interpose, either as a mediator, or a judge. The ministry of man is as an enlightened instructor and guide, to lead the soul to Christ ;—to proclaim the fulness of His work, and to exhort the sinner, spiritually to receive and follow Him. Before the Saviour's feet, the soul is to pour forth its wants with perfect confidence, and the assurance that He will hear ; and from the Saviour's hands it is to receive abundantly, grace upon grace ;—so that

man, coming in faith to Christ, shall come short in no gift, but rejoice in the fulness of Him who filleth all in all.

And now, my friends, the Saviour thus calls for you. Go, listen to Him; confer with Him, submit to Him; find every thing in Him; be satisfied to have Him alone as your portion and treasure. But stay not back from Him. Stop not short of Him. If you have Him, you have every thing. As His, you will delight to obey His commands, and to honour His name. But your first great want is Christ himself. And your great and all-important and precious privilege is, that Christ is ready and waiting, to receive and bless you with the possession of himself; to enter into you, and to dwell within you forever. O, let this animate and encourage you to obey His calls, and to cultivate a still more near and intimate acquaintance and communion with Him. In every providence, in every gift, in every trial, O, seek the voice of Jesus, speaking by His Spirit to yourself, and hear what the Lord God will speak concerning you. He has much to tell you that you have never heard; and much which you will rejoice to hear, as He gives you the ability to understand His words. There are treasures of grace laid up in Him, which eternity will not exhaust. And the habit of delighting in Him, and of being satisfied with Him, which you will acquire here, by dwelling and abiding "in Christ," will be a blessed preparation for the high privilege of understanding, and possessing, and enjoying Him forever;—when "with Christ," you receive the end of your faith, even the full salvation of your souls.

CHAPTER XI.

ONENESS IN CHRIST.

WE have passed through many of the attributes of the members of Christ, in their present state of grace. We cannot better conclude this portion of our subject than by dwelling a little, upon their complete oneness in Christ, in whom they are. The Saviour's purpose and prayer for his disciples was, that they might be *one*. One, in the strictest and most entire sense in which intelligent and independent beings could be united ;—"as thou Father in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." That His real disciples are therefore one, and must always be one, in the sense to which His mind was directed in this prayer, cannot be doubted, without questioning His ability to accomplish the result for which He prayed, and thus unsettling the whole stability and prospect of the Gospel and the church of God. That His Gospel is really adapted and competent in the ministration of the Holy Spirit, to produce this projected unity, can no more be questioned, without denying the Saviour's ability to frame an instrument, competent and adapted to attain the end which He desired and proposed. The Apostle Paul lays down the principle that unity is the mark of true

religion;—and that unity in true religion is the work of God, the mark of God's people, and the proper object of pursuit, for those who would honour Him, and build up His spiritual church. On the other hand, divisions among the professed supporters of the Gospel, are represented as carnal in their origin and influence, and conformed only to the will and habits of men, in the course to which they lead. This religious unity among men, is the end, to which the real operation of the Gospel tends. And wherever the Gospel rules alone, unmolested and unperverted by earthly influence, and the corrupting plans of men, the actual result of its operation, is this unity of which the Apostle speaks. Wherever there are seen and found, divisions in opposition to this Christian oneness, and envying and strife attending upon these divisions, and arising out of them; they are, and they are to be considered, the evidence of the interference of another power, entirely diverse from that of the Gospel, and operating in direct opposition to it. If among any bodies of professed Christians, or within any such body separately considered, there be divisions, envying and strife, we are therefore authorized to say of them, "they are carnal, and walk as men." But in considering this subject, it is important to inquire, what is the testimony of facts in this case? Has this Gospel ever produced among men, any thing which may be considered as the unity here specified? Is there such an oneness within our reach, as a visible and practicable object of pursuit? These are questions involving much that is of great practical consequence to us. As such, I would consider them.

What is this oneness in Christ to which we refer ?

It is most evidently, not a mere intellectual unity; an agreement however perfect, in every view of religious doctrine; that is, an entire uniformity of religious sentiment. Such an unity as this, is not *possible* among unequal minds. Unless every single mind is supposed to have attained an entire, and an equally perfect view of religious truth, it is impossible to imagine an entire uniformity of religious sentiments pervading them. Every step in the progress of spiritual study and acquirement opens, not only new truths to view, but also, which is a fact of equal consequence, new relations of actual truths to each other. There is an intellectual perspective, as well as a physical one; in the opening of which, as the mind proceeds on its journey in science, the whole landscape continually changes; distances, proportions, relations successively come forth to view; past impressions are relinquished, and new ones are received; judgments formed upon partial consideration are renounced, and general convictions including and modifying them in every variety of shape are formed. There are involved in the very progress of the mind in the study of the Gospel, new conceptions of truth, and varying conceptions of the truth every day.

Light after light, well used, they shall attain.

Even the angels above cannot be said to agree in a perfect intellectual unity. They are ever studying, learning, mutually imparting, and mutually acquiring. They are of necessity there-

fore, changing their conclusions, and their views of truth, the partial for general, and the superficial for deeper, at every step. If this were not so, learning and study would be idle, and without an object. It cannot be said of any inferior minds, unless we suppose them to be perfectly equal in their powers, and in the progress of their attainments, that they can thus perfectly agree. While any thing remains to be learned, new conclusions, perhaps very different conclusions, are still to be formed and to be expressed. An omniscient mind alone can understand all truth. "The unity required in the church," says Bishop Stillingfleet, "is not an unity of judgment and apprehension among the members of it, which, though it be their duty to endeavour after, yet is no further attainable by man's endeavours, than Adamic perfection is. And *unio Christianorum* in this sense, is one of the jewels belonging to the crown of heaven."

This intellectual equality, without which there can be no intellectual uniformity, would not be *desirable*, even if it were possible. Its necessary result would be a tame and uninteresting identity of minds, constituting the whole race in fact, but a single individual. It would destroy the chief beauty of the intelligent world; breaking up that whole variety of construction and display, which in minds as in matter, forms a yet more glorious harmony, from the very diversity in which its individuals shine. It would close that opened heavenly way which now directs

Our knowledge, and the scale of nature sets
From centre to circumference, whereon

In contemplation of created things
By *steps* we may ascend to God.

As it annihilated the beauty, so would it overturn much of the mutual benevolence of intelligent beings. It would constitute an entire independence of minds upon each other; making all to know as much as any; calling into being an indifference to others, and a selfish satisfaction and complacency, for which no uniformity of sentiment, or agreement in opinion, could ever be considered an adequate compensation. Vainly therefore, do men strive for, and insist upon, this perfect similarity of opinion and judgment, as the intended unity of the Christian church. Had this been the point divinely proposed and appointed, the Bible would have been a simple catena of articles, like the ancient Creeds; articles to be imposed upon all, and to be received by all; articles without which there could be no salvation; less than which would have been infidelity, more than which additions of man's device. God be praised, His blessed Bible is no iron mask like this. It is full of divine instruction, with which the diligent soul shall be made fat. But its blessings are to descend only upon those who read, and study, and meditate; who are not only learning, but also coming to the knowledge of the truth. And the discovered width and depth of the stream of light and knowledge, is regulated by the distance we travel along its heavenly banks, and the zeal with which we attempt to ford it; presenting unceasing encouragement to those who labour to understand, and to stand perfect in all the will of God.

This religious unity is as evidently, not a mere external, apparent unity of profession and name,—a oneness of temporary discipline, and outward type. Such an unity as this, an universal form, without a co-ordinate entire intellectual unity delighting to express itself through this form, would be an intolerable burden. Outward union of religious form is the creature of mere earthly power and arrangement, and it must perish, and pass away with the earth from which it springs. It may be valued as an expression of truth, for the inferior purposes to which it may be made subservient, and which it is able to promote. But it cannot justly be considered as any thing beyond an incident, however occasionally of increased importance, in the spiritual and abiding system of Gospel truth. The very condition of man upon earth renders the actual perfection of such an outward union in discipline and appearance, excluding all variety, utterly impossible. The changes in human generations and circumstances, as man passes on through successive steps in the history and destiny of his race, must continually tend to break it up. To say that these necessary changes only break up certain less important parts of this discipline, but leave its fundamental substratum of authority and requisition still entire, is an assertion wholly arbitrary, and a weak begging of the whole question. If God has appointed an entire oneness in the circumstances of outward religious discipline, as man's absolute duty under the Gospel, as he did under the Law, it is not for man to speculate upon the comparative importance of its various impositions. The bell and

the pomegranate are of as much importance, and clothed with as much authority, in such a system, as the Temple and the veil. The Jewish system of religion was necessarily local. And any Judaizing of the Gospel, to cramp it up in an unyielding outward shape of ministration and observance, of equal necessity localizes and limits it. No mere outward imposition, unless it be of the simplest character, can be unvaryingly preached to every creature. Had this external uniformity been the Lord's plan of oneness for His people under the Gospel, He would have laid down exactly, the outward system, to which it might be possible to conform all the generations and nations of men, to whom His Gospel was to be proclaimed. And wherever such an arrangement of ordinances had been established and proclaimed by Him, the very omission of every point beyond it, becomes the strongest declaration that in this relation, such points were merely incidents and not essentials. This our God and Saviour has done, in setting up a living ministry of men to preach His word, and two outward rites as marks and professions of those who embrace it. Beyond this, men may go in the expediency of circumstances, not in the authority of absolute imposition.

The attempt to carry out such an outward system in every possible application, and to make a mere uniformity of circumstances and outward condition the desired oneness of the church of God, has been Satan's imitation of the spiritual kingdom of the Lord, and the spiritual communion over which He reigns, in that perfection of his craft for man's destruction, the system

of Anti-Christian Rome. All such impositions, set forth and received, as the required unity of the church, must be the result of constraint on the one side, and of indifference or weakness on the other; the usurpings of ambitious authority, and the yielding of the spirit of feebleness in submission to it. It is a worthless impounding of the divergent spirits of men, under the mere key of terrifying force, instead of the transformation of them by the inwardly renewing and subduing influence of spiritual and unchanging truth. It is a shell to cover merely, and not a substance to abide. In such a system Satan accomplishes the destruction of men in two entirely separate ways,—by the power of superstition within, and by the power of infidelity without. If you allow external toleration in religious concerns, you have necessarily external variety, the natural result of freedom. If you refuse it, you make the alternative of submission, infidelity,—the inevitable product of constraint. Rome refuses toleration, and in doing it, has all the responsibility of propagating infidels. It says to surrounding men who look upon its system, “You shall be this or nothing, for no other system shall be allowed.” And men reply, “Then we will be nothing,” and they abide by their choice. And whether they are brought in, or excluded, Satan’s plan in their destruction is equally secured. External minute uniformity is not the Lord’s plan of oneness for his people.

The unity of the Gospel,—the unity which it gives to man, and enjoins upon man, and by which the church of God is known, in opposition to all the divisions of men, is a spiritual unity; which

though consistent with much outward diversity, is real, operative, and permanent. "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." It is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in the hearts in which He dwells and rules; the result of which is an everlasting and unchangeable oneness of such souls thus renewed, in their relations to God, and to each other. It is an unity of *motive*, by which every true Christian, every real member of the body of Christ, is led to desire only and above all things, the promotion of the divine glory. It is an unity of *desire*, by which each one seeks to attain the one mind, and character, and presence, of a beloved Lord. It is an unity of *purpose and plan*, by which every possessor of it is prompted to obey, and honour, and imitate, one Divine Master and Guide of all renewed souls. It is an unity of *spiritual experience*, in which each one has been enlightened and quickened by the same Divine Spirit,—made to feel the same burden of guilt,—to be conscious of the same personal deficiencies,—to seek the same provisions of divine mercy,—to accept the same complete salvation in Christ,—to find pardon in the same fountain of love,—to depend upon the same inward spiritual power, divinely bestowed,—to ask for the same gifts of grace,—to rest upon the same Almighty victorious arm,—to hope for the same eternal glory,—to confide in the same perfect obedience, and to fasten all their hopes and joys upon the same infinite sufficiency of one glorious reigning Lord. It is an unity of *relation* which has joined together vast multitudes who have no outward knowledge of each other, in one eternal and indissoluble bond,—an unity which in

this view expresses itself habitually in prayer, in sympathy, in love, in spiritual aid, and which in this operation, is made the grand instrument of the Holy Ghost in enlarging this heavenly companionship, and of gathering lost and perishing souls into the shelter which is thus displayed. It is an unity of *affection and feeling*, which the Apostle calls the most perfect bond which can subsist among men. "Put on charity, which is the bond of perfection!" far higher, more real, more operative, more lasting, more divine, than all the possible bonds of intellectual agreement, or accordance in outward discipline.

Here is unity,—real, actual oneness. A oneness which brings vast multitudes who had no common relations, but the needs, and guilt, and feebleness of a common humanity, into one spiritual connection from which they go no more out. Here is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and in all; one body, one spirit, one hope of one divine calling." How can there be greater unity among independent, intelligent beings? In what do they differ, which is not temporary and comparatively unimportant? In what do they agree, which can ever fade or perish? Surely, the boasted unity in discipline of Papal Rome, is nothing in comparison of this. *That* is the oneness of bodies which are alike, because all are dead, and motionless, and without self-control. *This* is the union of living agents, who are one, because all perfectly agree in the same great and choral harmony of love, and activity, and praise. *That* is the organized working of a machine, in

which every automaton figure obeys the will of him who directs the motions of the whole. *This* is the combined energy of responsible beings, who, moved by the same spirit, accord in voluntary united operation, to produce the same great and desired result. *That* is the valley of Ezekiel, when its bones were scattered, and were alike, because all were bleached and dry. *This* is the same valley when the army stood forth clothed in the activity, and endowed with the powers of a new life, and the one Spirit of God breathed from every quarter, upon the standing host, and they lived, and moved, and acted, and went forth to victory, under His single heavenly guidance. This is unity,—entire, actual, operative unity. But it is perfectly consistent with great outward diversity of nation, and language, and form of worship;—with many and wide differences of judgment upon many unessential points of mere intellectual perception;—with very differing conceptions of truth progressively understood, and, as yet, but very partially discerned by any.

This blessed oneness of heart and feeling must everywhere govern the members of Christ. Wretched is the house and heart which has it not. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace and order, as well as liberty. It must rule in the individual congregation of professing Christians, uniting in the same house of prayer, for worship and mutual edification. It must there oppose and correct all the divisions which jealousy and earthly pride, or selfish interest may tend to produce. Here men are to be all of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and cour-

teous, to be of the same mind one towards another, according to Christ Jesus. In the whole church of God it must be the governing principle, extending its influence and embrace, not merely within the limits of one particular outward communion, but to the whole company of God's people,—to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

It is an union however, with the people of God alone,—with real manifest believers in the Lord Jesus,—with the true servants of the Most High ; which seeks them for its objects here, because they are to be its eternal objects hereafter ; and which renounces for them, the society and fellowship of the unbelieving, superstitious, and profane. Whoever is to dwell with us forever in the Saviour's glory, must be united with us, in our exercise of sympathy and love upon the earth. And though we may differ, and must differ, in judgment and perception, and conclusions here,—yet there need be no divisions, envyings, or strife. Whereto we have already attained, we are to walk by the same rule, we are to mind the same thing. Our union is not to be with the ungodly, or profane ; or with this evil world, whose friendship is enmity with God ; but with the people of the Living God. Union with them for efforts to advance His glory, and to establish His truth, we have no right to withhold, or to refuse. We are bound to edify them ;—we have no authority to destroy them. To withhold our fellowship and co-operation in the Saviour's work for those whom we really believe

to be His servants, in the extent to which we are able to impart it, must always be sin.

This is a oneness whose duration will be eternal. The bond by which the renewed people of God are bound together on earth, is the bond which unites them all to Christ. It is an imperishable bond. It is the work of a Spirit of almighty and undying power. It is the operation of a plan of grace which was formed in an eternity past, and which will abide in an eternity to come. The principles upon which it is formed, and by which it is governed, are the inseparable elements of a purified, intelligent mind. And when all the bonds of earthly circumstances, the outward conformations of ministries and ordinances have passed forever away, the whole company of God's elect, the real church and body of Christ, shall stand up together in an imperishable fellowship, known by one name, animated by one spirit, combined together in one glorious employment for eternity. The chaff of material organizations, whose protection was needful for a season, shall have been swept from the floor; and the wheat of abiding principle, of sympathy, and peace, and love, and truth, shall be gathered into the garner, and remain forever.

In opposition to this enjoined and required unity of the Christian body, the Apostle solemnly declares, that divisions, envyings, and strife, are carnal. He does not mean mere differences of opinion, of judgment, even upon important points of doctrine,—differences which were found and tolerated, not only among the apostolic churches, but among the Apostles themselves. They re-

ceived different measures of divine light, and their conclusions and views of duty varied accordingly. And the Holy Spirit has thought fit to record this important fact, and to show how, in the case of Peter, (compare his Epistles with the Epistle to the Galatians,) even in an inspired man, increasing experience brought out a clearer and better understanding of the Gospel, in the closing years of life. That the whole church of Christ should be of one judgment and habit, in external conformity, can never be expected, nor is it in all respects to be desired. The divisions against which the Apostle warns, are such as spring from envy, and result in strife. They are carnal,—carnal in their *origin*. It is not truth, nor the love of truth, which promotes them, but often extreme hostility to truth, and to the spirit which real truth imparts. They are carnal in their *influence*. Nothing more certainly disturbs and destroys the spiritual mind. They break up all peace and joy within the soul. They destroy all the holiness and power of the church without. They are carnal in their *effects*. They separate real brethren from each other; and often divide into unnecessary and lasting hostility, those who are partakers of common privileges and blessings. They are the walk and the course of men, merely selfish in their purposes and operations, eager for personal aggrandizement, careless of mutual injury. Sad indeed is it that such a course should ever be introduced into the church of Christ. But, blessed be God, they are carnal in their *duration* also. They belong to the earth, and they will perish with the earth from which they

spring. The servants of the Lord will soon outlive them, and pass beyond the field of their operation and influence. The hour will come, when they shall be mere men no longer,—but, equal unto the angels, as the children of the resurrection, they shall all have the one mind which was in Christ Jesus the Lord.

I would entreat my readers, let such a system have no dominion among you. Strive to walk, not as men, but as the servants of the Living God. Avoid these contentions among Christians, and those who originate them. Look less at the facts in religion which are temporary and fading, and more at those which are permanent and unchangeable,—less at mere outward characteristics, and more at the real and spiritual marks of the church of God,—less at the deficiencies of others, and more at the needs and dangers of your own souls. We are in no danger of loving the true servants of God too much, or of uniting too much with those who are really united to Christ. Let it be our purpose and effort, to pray for, and to communicate peace and mercy to all who walk according to this rule, as the Israel of God.

WITH CHRIST.

TO BE WITH CHRIST, WHICH IS FAR BETTER.—PHILIPPIANS i. 23.

CHAPTER XII.

IN our preceding pages, we have considered the condition of man "*in Christ*,"—his state of grace on earth. I wish now to lead my readers to a series of remarks upon the condition of man "*with Christ*,"—his state of everlasting glory. The passage of Scripture before us, brings this subject simply and directly to our view. "To be with Christ, which is far better."

It is a striking peculiarity of the Gospel, that the special reward which it offers to its faithful disciples and defenders, is simply an enjoyment of the presence and glory of their Master. The result of all their toil, deprivation, and suffering in His service, is that they shall be with Him, behold His glory, and see Him as He is. They are taught to consider this a recompense fully adequate for every suffering which is endured, and for all the persecutions through which they pass, in doing His will upon the earth. They are to be happy, and it is supposed they will be eternally and perfectly happy, in the permission to dwell forever with Him whose service has been their

chosen treasure upon the earth, and for whom they have freely counted all other things but loss.

This peculiarity of promise and reward, is a very important distinction of the Gospel. It constitutes one of the most important incidental proofs of the divine authority and character of the Saviour, and one which has received far too little attention, in the general consideration of this subject. If an impostor had been attempting to delude mankind into submission to himself, by the promise of an ultimate recompense for their present losses in his service; he would have necessarily adopted into his scheme of attraction, those rewards, and those only, which were suited to the habits, and likely to meet the tastes and desires of the persons whom he would persuade. Any other course would be an infatuation, inevitably punished with total failure. How remarkably was this fact illustrated in the case of Mohammed! To attract the ardent and sensual Asiatics, he described for them, as a future perpetual residence, a material paradise, furnished with every indulgence for earthly appetites, and unlimited gratifications for the passions of conquerors who had died in blood. The principle of his course was natural and wise. It accorded perfectly with the most powerful, and the ruling propensities, of those to whom he addressed himself. And because it did so, it was extensively successful. The same principle might be equally illustrated from other sources. It is necessarily universal in the schemes of future hope, which men form for themselves. Man can

create no expectations, but according to the general guidance of his past experience and knowledge. The hopes of the future will be shaped and coloured by the enjoyments of the past; and men will habitually look for happiness in the lines, in which their happiness has been already found.

The application of this rule to our Divine Lord would have compelled Him, were He an impostor, to the adoption of a far different course from that which distinguished His ministry on earth. He would have addressed to the Jewish people, arguments and prospects suited to their habits and desires. He might have promised them deliverance from Roman oppression. He might have assured to them the restoration of the days of Solomon, when Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating, and drinking, and making merry. He might have flattered them, that Jerusalem should immediately become the metropolis of an universal empire, and their land be made the joy and mistress of the whole earth. He would of course have exalted the worth of observances to which they were devoted, and have been, like them, fierce, exclusive, and inexorable in the enforcement of their law. And when He proposed a reward for their fidelity, which should be conferred in a future and unseen world, He could have imagined no other, than some special national elevation, which would attract the pride of the children of Abraham, and appear to be a recompense adequate to the degradation which they had suffered, and the losses which they might

bear for Him. This course would have been inevitable, if our Lord, as a mere man, had originated for himself a plan, by which, under the profession of divine authority, he would impose upon the Jewish nation,—deceive mankind, and elevate himself. It would be vain to suppose Him able to select any other instruments of persuasion, than those to which His natural habits of thinking, and the circumstances of His education had accustomed Him; or desirous to employ any methods, but those which should promise to be most availing and successful among the people to whom they were addressed. Had He assumed this standing and appearance, as an ambitious founder of a new sect on earth, He would probably have been, like many other impostors, successful in the enterprise which he had undertaken.

But what are the facts in the case? A lowly being appeared among men in Palestine, mild, forbearing, and retired in His character;—accused of ignorance,—known to be poor;—without ability to reward His followers, or to protect himself. He wandered for years among the people, who everywhere despised Him, except as they were sometimes startled and astonished at the miracles which He wrought; and who always hated Him, notwithstanding this occasional astonishment at His power. He was in a lonely life, the object of unceasing persecution;—and finally in a wretched death, the unresisting victim of human malignity and rage. He lived in poverty and suffering, and He died in agony and dishonour;—though He had done no evil, and in His

mouth was found no guile. This meek and retired man preached in Judea, and called disciples to himself. He warned them of their sins and exhorted them to holiness. He required them to forsake every thing else for His sake. He commanded them to take up a cross and follow Him. He reminded them that He had not where to lay His head, and the disciple could not hope to be better provided than his Master. He forewarned them that they would probably suffer a violent death, as the result of becoming followers of Him;—that they would endure painful persecutions for His sake;—that they must be hated, and cast out, and scourged, and killed;—that the world, which allowed no resting place for Him, would prepare no shelter, more kind or comfortable for them. This was the prospect,—and the only prospect, as far as the present life was concerned, which He proposed to any whom He invited to follow and to serve Him, in His great undertaking for the spiritual salvation of the world.

And for all this earthly deprivation and suffering, what did He offer them, as their expected future reward? Simply that they should be with Him,—they should see His glory,—they should partake of His throne,—they should have a mansion in His Father's house. But how little was such a proposal adapted to persuade mankind to embrace persecution and death, for the elevation of a leader, who appeared so perfectly incompetent, to fulfil even the promises which He had thus indefinitely made. What prospect had HE, of a throne hereafter, who could not find security from

a violent death here? What pleasure could arise from merely being with Him? Where would He be? Would He be more likely to be able to reward them in another world, than He had been to protect them in this? How little attraction was there, in persecution and death, with no other alleviation than a hope so doubtful and visionary as this to succeed it! It may well be asked, who but one insane would have selected such a system as this, in an attempt to impose upon, and to govern mankind? Its success would be an anomaly that would contradict every record of past history, and every established principle of the human mind connected with this subject. So far as mere human motives and calculations are concerned, such an attempt would have been an infallible method to deter, and drive off, all who desired to become disciples of this new, and apparently self-commissioned teacher. And were our blessed Lord a man, having merely the purposes of human ambition and personal elevation to secure, there is presented here a difficulty in the way of accounting for the history of His Gospel, which no man can solve.

From such a review of this peculiar characteristic of the Gospel, that the presence of its Author is the reward which it offers to its disciples; we rise with the deep impression upon our minds, that our Divine Lord could not have been an impostor, attempting to deceive; and the infidel has to explain in *his* view of the case, a wonder greater and more inexplicable, than any of the miracles which he rejects:—by what means, with such a motive, such success should have

been obtained. Our conviction becomes the deeper, and the more indelible, that He was in truth, the Holy One of God, the Divine and mighty Lord, whose goings forth have been from everlasting, and in whose presence there is the fulness of eternal joy. With this conviction we acknowledge the wisdom of His disciples, in forsaking all things to follow Him; and feeling that it would be a sufficient reward for them to be with Him forever, and to see Him eternally as He is. In this prospect, we wonder at no sufferings voluntarily endured;—we are startled at no relinquishment which they were required to make for Him. The far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory of His own exalted and everlasting abode, still remained, when the present light affliction which was but for a moment, had passed away forever.

But this peculiarity of the Gospel scheme, was not presented in the Saviour's personal ministry alone. The Apostles, whom He sent abroad to preach the glad tidings of His redemption, after He had returned to His glory, assume the same ground, and describe precisely the same reward. They dwell upon their future eternal presence with their beloved Lord, as the single and complete object of their desires and hopes. With them in this relation, Christ was all. To be in Christ here, was to be peaceful, secure, and happy on the earth. To be with Christ hereafter, was to be forever, all that the heart of a redeemed man could want or conceive. To be without Christ, was to be separated from the enjoyment, or the possibility of any good. The

writers of the New Testament form no descriptions of joy, but in connection with Him;—and of every denunciation, or picture of wretchedness, the chief feature is a separation from Him. Where Christ is, there is heaven for them. Where Christ cannot be, there for them is hell. With this prospect they were actuated and comforted, and with this, they would persuade others also. Having this in view, they exhort believers to count it all joy, though they should fall into divers temptations; and to rejoice in this, though they were counted worthy to suffer shame, and sorrow, and death, for Christ's sake.

In writing to the Philippians, the words before us, the Apostle expresses this, as the hope which animated and encouraged him under circumstances of very deep distress. He was bound with a chain,—the prisoner of the Lord,—in bonds for the Gospel's sake. As it regarded the present life, he knew not how it should go with him. But the presence of his Divine Lord illuminated his dungeon, and the hope of being with Christ could quiet and console all his sorrows. The bonds of personal friendship on the earth were strong. The ties of a spiritual father to His children in the Lord were still stronger. And for their sakes, he was willing to be absent from the Lord for a season. But the dwelling with Christ, for which he hoped and looked, was far better than all that he could have upon the earth,—and therefore his desire was to depart, and to be with Christ. He exhibits this as the Christian's state of glory. All other descriptions which may be given of the blessedness of the people of God,

range themselves under this one grand fact, and like lesser lights, gather all their power and beauty from this solar point. Angels are there,—blessed spirits of the redeemed are there,—celestial harmony is there,—splendor inconceivable to man, and glories unutterable in the language of man. But all these are circumstances. The great fact is, Christ is there. In His presence is the fulness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures for evermore. Of this glory of the saints with Christ, I desire to speak ;—though it is but little, that man can wisely say upon such a theme. From this introductory consideration we are led to remark upon the sublime simplicity of the Gospel, as it is displayed in the general views which we now propose to take.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as a grand system and principle of divine grace and power, ministered by the Holy Ghost to man, includes within itself many particulars. But it has remarkable unity as a whole, and to be adequately understood and appreciated, it is to be regarded as a single whole. As it reveals a system of duties and obligations, it includes every particular demand in the one grand requisition of perfect reconciliation to God. As it reveals the actual spiritual condition of man to whom it is sent, every minute trait of human necessity is included in the one great fact of man's native alienation from God. Though many evils in his habits, tastes, and determinations may be very apparent, and deserve very serious consideration, this one evil is the fountain of the whole ; and when this is cleansed, all will be clean. Though the Gospel imposes

many duties upon man, they are all flowing from the one principle of union with God in Christ whom it reveals, and simple submission and conformity to Him. It urges the wandering heart therefore, to a simple return to God the Saviour, in filial, thankful faith. "This is the work of God," it says, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." All inquiries, hesitation, and doubts, are here shut up in the single principle of personal inward thankful confidence in the Lord of all. No will-worship is enjoined,—no varied framework of services and duties. The one command of new love to God, in the reconciled soul, includes all the residue; and all these grow of necessity from an obedience to that; so that the message of the Gospel is a single and uniform message, everywhere the same, adapted to all mankind, and intelligible to all to whom it comes.

In the promises of the Gospel, the same divine simplicity is displayed. All possible points for inquiry to a believing soul, in reference to a future world, are shut up, in the one single, blessed testimony, "Where I am, there shall ye be also." Curiosity is thus completely arrested, and doubts and hesitations are completely silenced. The soul that loves Christ, understands and appreciates the worth of this blessed prospect. Many precious facts are included in this promise; and many important fields for contemplation are thus thrown open. But they are all subordinate to the one grand point of the Redeemer's personal presence and glory; and that abides, the great fact of the believer's rest. There is a sublimity in this; a perfect assurance on the Lord's part, of His own

sufficiency to reward and bless His people, which is far too little considered. Here in the whole prospect of the Christian, "Christ is all." Every thing else is but the fringe of the garment of blessedness which eternity presents. JESUS, JESUS is the robe itself,—the seamless, spotless, changeless vesture of the soul redeemed and justified eternally in Him. And when this one hope takes possession of the heart, and man united to the Lord Jesus, loves Him, and lives upon Him:—all other joys are laid up in this one. To such a man, living in Christ; of all possible portions, "to depart and be with Christ, is far better." His mind will rest upon this. His thoughts will revolve around it. His hopes will be excited by it. And as faith living upon Christ is the main principle of his life on earth, so hope reaching forward to be with Christ, is the one uniform source of his happiness for the future world. Thus simply does the Gospel present the Christian's state of glory. It is "to depart and to be with Christ."

This leads us to the very important fact, that increasing preparation for future glory, is displayed in an increasing satisfaction and delight, with the Saviour whose presence is to constitute this glory. He that grows in grace, grows in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; becomes more acquainted with His character and work; more grateful for every instruction in these great subjects, and for every opportunity to meditate upon them. This is the great principle of the Christian's preparation for glory. He derives his comfort and peace more abundantly and directly from Christ. He becomes actually more con-

formed to Him in mind and character. He desires to see Him, and to serve Him more simply and completely. He strives to be increasingly, in the custom of consulting Him, following Him, and depending upon Him. In his habitual experience, Christ becomes more really, *all* to him. And his affections, his conscience, and his understanding, are all occupied in the effort to embrace and hold fast that blessed hope which has thus been given him in his Divine Redeemer and Lord. This constitutes an increasing preparation for that state, in which to be with Christ, is to be, and to have, forever, all that the soul can desire or need. The very simplicity which marks the commands, and the promises of the Gospel, thus marks also, the character of those whom the Saviour blesses and receives. The nearer they approach Him, this simplicity of character marks them more completely. They gain more of that child-like spirit which lives,—and loves to live,—alone upon Him. And as each earthly idol is successively removed,—and the cares of earth become less engrossing and distracting,—and the heart is made more ready to be satisfied with Christ alone, as all its salvation, and all its desire, the river is drawing nearer to the ocean, into which it will pour at last its cheerful current;—the soul is becoming riper and readier for a happy eternity; and the Christian becomes more able, intelligently and affectionately to say,—“To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.”

I would urge my readers to estimate properly

this important subject, and strive by all means, and constantly, to have the Saviour exalted in their minds, as himself the rock of their salvation, and the crown of their hope. There is much in our own self-righteous spirits, and much in the state of the world around us, to lead us off from this. The arts of the enemy are constantly directed here; to separate us from personal approach to the Saviour, and to unsettle our confidence in Him. By every distracting allurements or care which he can employ, he will try to call off our minds from a constant waiting upon Christ. Be watchful and anxious my friends, upon this subject. Be not satisfied with any aspect of apparent religion within you, or around you, which does not lead you, to look off from every thing besides, and with more constant and complete dependance, to find your all in Jesus Christ the Lord;—to seek Him in prayer, to depend upon Him in love, and to rejoice in Him with hope. The first failings of a backsliding spirit are found here. The complete triumph of worldliness of mind will be found here. Let those of you who hope that they are in Christ, see to this danger and guard against it.

To others, I can only say, that there is no entrance to a Christian's state of glory, but through a Christian's state of grace on earth. To be with Christ hereafter, you must now be reconciled in Him to God. O seek in living faith, and with true repentance, the refuge which is here proposed. Approach the shelter which is here laid open. In the conversion of your souls to God,

by accepting and following the offered Saviour, through the Holy Spirit, obtain the hope which Jesus gives His people here ; and following Him in newness of life, you shall be made partakers of His promises and His glory.

CHAPTER XIII.

REST.

UNDER these two words “with Christ,” we are speaking of the future blessedness of the people of God. They describe the everlasting recompense of reward, to which the Apostle looked forward, amidst the labours of his life and the sorrows of his imprisonment. They exhibit the provision of glory which a Saviour offers to His people. They describe the whole portion which a renewed heart desires. To this description, our attention is directed, and it will be profitable and pleasant for us to consider some of the various aspects of this state of glory, which are presented to us in the sacred word of God, as peculiarly adapted to the different circumstances and capacities of man. This is the appointed issue of the present life of faith and trial in the Saviour’s service ; and its provisions and offers are particularly appropriate to the special trials and experience which characterize the present state.

We will first consider the Christian’s state of glory as a state of *rest*, for the disciple whose present life has been that of a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. To be with Christ, is to be

in a state of permanent spiritual rest. "There remaineth a rest for the people of God."

The present probation of the renewed soul is in the school of care and sorrow. This is the necessary result of its native alienation from God. Man's sufferings are the legitimate consequences of his sin. But God is mercifully pleased to overrule these sufferings, and the painful conflicts which they produce, to strengthen the character, and to perfect the holiness, of those whom He hath set apart for himself. He makes their trials to be the fountain of their hopes. He teaches them to value and to desire, the salvation which He has provided for them, by a deep experience of its want. He prepares them fully to enjoy it, by undergoing much to discourage, as well as much to excite them, in their way to it.

While the Christian was still in his unrenewed nature, alienated from God,—a child of disobedience,—he was subjected to a vast multitude of outward sorrows, appertaining to man's present earthly condition. But these outward sorrows, though hard to bear, are not the worst, nor the most painful attendants upon man's condition as a fallen being. The burden of conscious sin is far heavier. And however careless man may treat it with indifference, the man in Christ deeply and painfully feels it. It is particularly in the service of his redeeming Lord, upon which he enters when he is born again of the Holy Spirit, that the Christian finds his conflicts to be prepared, and himself required to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. His victory then comes as the result of serious contest. Peculiar

and untried enemies are around him, from the very day on which he enters upon the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life eternal. It is the immutable will and dispensation of God, to lead him onward in the Saviour's path, perfected through sufferings; and to stablish, settle, and strengthen him for a future glory, by keeping him in the constant and active exercise of every weapon of his holy warfare.

As a soldier in contest, he is in the midst of innumerable powerful enemies within and without. He must fight unceasingly, not as one that beateth the air. His own heart must be subdued to a spirit of uniform submission to the will of God. Abroad are burdens and temptations in ever-changing variety. At home are despondencies and fears yet more numerous and distressing. This is the character of his present dispensation. And though individual causes of suffering are as countless as the various characters and feelings of men, the same general rule applies to all the servants of the Lord;—through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God.

As a pilgrim and traveller seeking his inheritance in a continuing city to come, he has often a long and weary road to pass, before he can gain his promised home. This journey is not indeed without its pleasures. It is not destitute of all circumstances adapted to animate and encourage him in its pursuit. But it is a journey without a rest. It is a constant forgetting of things which are behind, and an anxious pressing forward to things which are before. It is an unceasing reaching for an unseen glory; while every attending

circumstance seems to utter a new testimony,—
“Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”

As a labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, a worker together with God, he has a full and prescribed measure of duty to accomplish on the earth. The Lord has laid out for him his course of work, and he must finish the work which has been given him to do. Whether this work be chiefly to strive for his own soul, or to give diligence also to save the souls of others;—it is still a work before him, which must be finished, and which allows no cessation of his toil, until it has been completed. He must continue to work the works of Him that sent him while the day lasts.

But as a soldier in contest, as a pilgrim in his journey, as a labourer in his work, there remaineth for the Christian a rest; and he looks forward with joyful confidence to that rest, when he shall depart, and be with Christ. When this glorious result of his course shall have been attained, his dispensation of conflicts and sorrows will have passed; and he will find himself in an enduring state of spiritual rest. Whatever griefs have arisen from mere earthly circumstances, they will have ceased forever. There will be no lamentation, where nothing can be lost. There can be no suspense where nothing is uncertain. There can be no contest, where there is no enemy;—no repentance where there is no sin. There it will have become true, that *all* tears are wiped from the eyes of those who are glorified with Christ. Every fountain of tears shall be dried, and the

causes which have conspired to produce anguish and crying shall have ceased to exist.

Under this inviting aspect, the Holy Spirit often presents the future dwelling of the redeemed soul. There the weary are at rest. It is not, however, mere dormancy of being,—a merely negative rest. There is occupation, and duty, and positive pleasure, suited to the enlarged capacities, and the holy tendencies of glorified spirits. But a remaining rest is the view of the recompense of reward, which contrasts it with present trials; and which leads us, while exercised with them, and groaning under their burden, to desire to depart, and be with Christ,—as the labourer seeketh the shadow of the evening, that the toil of his work may give place to his necessary and wished for repose. In the world, says the Lord to His disciples, ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace. The Apostle comforts the Thessalonians in their troubles, with this prospect of rest with the Lord Jesus, when He shall be revealed from heaven with power and great glory. Each wearied believer shall participate in this rest, and unite in the glory of the Lord, who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God. Within him will be peace, because all the power and propensities of sin have been annihilated forever. Around him there will be peace, for but one desire and feeling shall govern the multitude of the redeemed, and one Master only shall they serve and follow. And while no possibility of future anguish can be

presented before Christ himself, every soul that is with Christ shall partake of the same glorious privilege. And in this one negative aspect,—a rest from toil and care,—the gain of being with Christ will be unspeakable.

But this rest with Christ, is not the mere freedom of the soul from sorrow and care. It is the pure and spiritual satisfaction and delight which the redeemed spirit derives from the eternal possession of a Divine Saviour. It is the calm and confiding enjoyment of His perfections and His glory;—it is the uninterrupted and unending contemplation of what He is, and of what He has done for His people;—it is the overflowing delight which the purified mind, and the enlarged heart of the sanctified believer experience, in the attainment and secure possession of an object infinitely precious, long sought for and desired, and in no degree disappointing the expectations it has awakened. It is the triumphant passage of thought over unknown scenes and objects of glory,—searching still more deeply into the unsearchable riches of grace, as revealed and laid up in the only begotten Son of God. It is the unutterable joy of harmony and order, to a soul which is alive with the most delicate sensibility to the delight which they afford. It is the rest of an affectionate child in the wise and uniform government of a father's house. It is the rest of an intelligence, now angelic,—may I not say superangelic, in the experience through which it has passed,—in the pure and spotless dominion of the Most High, all whose ways are

perfect, and whose will is the highest manifestation of wisdom and love.

How valuable is such a prospect,—how precious is such a rest to the true follower of the Lord Jesus! Under all his present trials in despondency and suffering, this anticipation of the excelling glory which is laid up with Christ, will be of unspeakable importance, and of the greatest practical worth. We may consider this practical worth, under three distinct aspects, applicable to the present circumstances of the Christian, arising from the views which have been now presented.

It is a *relative* rest for the servant of Christ, considered as a sufferer from present outward circumstances. It is a condition of perfect peace in connection with those with whom he dwells. Are the members of Christ here burdened with earthly sorrows? Do they look back to number years which have gone by, by the afflictions and sorrows which have successively distinguished them? Have they once said with Job, “I shall die in my nest,” and yet have they lived to say with him in the sadness of subsequent experience, “My days fly away, and I see no good?” Have anxieties and disappointments corroded their peace? Have bodily pains racked their bones, and driven sleep from their eyes? Do they write the memorials of their days with tears?—How precious to such wayworn pilgrims is the opening hope, which our subject presents! What a world will that be, where no hand shall be pressed in final separation,—where the signals of departure shall have lost their meaning,—where we can look upon those whom we love, without the harsh thought pressing upon the

mind, that the place which now knows them shall soon know them no more,—where no inhabitant shall say, “I am sick,”—where no retrospection shall bring to mind, scenes and thoughts, whose whole power is to minister distress! Let all the suffering members of Christ look forward to this rest. Make it sure to your minds, that you are in Christ, in the spiritual renewing of those minds by the Holy Ghost, and then fix your hopes upon the peace and blessedness which shall follow, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. Contrast the unvarying aspect of this blessedness, with the tossings of the present tempestuous world. Let the hope which it offers teach you, while troubled about many things, that this inheritance alone is the one thing needful; and that he is the happy man, whoever and wherever he may be, to whom Christ is now the hope of glory, abiding within his heart; and for whom, He will therefore be the everlasting gain in the hour of his departure. You meet with many temporal disappointments, and embarrassments;—perhaps your agitated mind has often asked, “What shall I eat?—what shall I drink?—wherewithal shall I be clothed?” Well: be you found in Christ, and it will not always be so. With Him is durable riches and righteousness. And he is rich,—not who layeth up treasure for himself here,—but who is rich toward God. You meet with many friends who fail you. Like Job, you are ready to say, “My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook;” or with the Prophet, “Every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders.” Disappointed successively in the char-

acters of men, you are ready to exclaim, "The godly man ceaseth; truth is perished from the earth." Look forward then with Paul to this better prospect. There is a Friend who loveth at all times. There is a place, where all countenances wear the habitual expression of honest and affectionate hearts;—where none are deceiving, or being deceived. See that your hopes and your affections are there established, and it will not be long, before things temporal shall yield to things eternal. We cannot pursue this particular application more minutely. It is designed to show, that there is no present outward trial, for which the dwelling with Christ does not furnish an adequate recompense in eternal rest;—and thus to encourage the living, suffering members of Christ, to endure unto the end, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

It is an *internal spiritual* rest for the believer, from his inward personal conflicts and trials,—a state of peace for his soul,—encouraging him by the hope which it presents, to endure with perseverance in his present contests with sin, and in his growth in holiness and grace. Do those who are now in Christ find that they cannot do the things that they would? When they would do good, is evil present with them? After all their efforts, and vigilance, and prayer, are unholy passions within them still unsubdued? Is a rebellious, wandering heart still beyond their power of constraint or control? Do they look back upon a Christian profession, and feel deeply sad, in the conviction how far they yet are, from having attained what they desire and ought to be? Are

they almost ready to conclude, while there is so much within them that is dark and unsatisfying, they have never been made the children of God? This is doubtless the case with many; the most truly so perhaps, with those who are attaining deeper views of the claims of Jesus, and of the sinfulness of their own hearts. O, what joy is presented in the prospect of a rest for the soul in the kingdom of the Lord! How happy would a single day now be, should it pass without one selfish desire, or one sinful passion to ruffle the temper of the mind!—without one wandering purpose to distract the heart from entire devotion to God!—without one sight or sound of sin abroad to wound the soul with the thought, *Wo is me, that I am constrained to dwell among those who are enemies unto peace!* And yet, how faint an illustration would such a day be, of the eternity provided for the redeemed soul! There the heart will be finally cleared and rescued from the stain and power of sin! Not one turbulent passion shall go with the believer, to the land of his inheritance! Not one sorrowful recollection of deficiency in duty, or of transgression against God, shall mar the perfection of its enjoyment! Not a temptation shall be presented to draw a single thought aside from God. There is no being with Christ, who wishes any thing for the believer, but his growth in holiness and enjoyment; no one who desires, or is able, to provoke him to any thing but love and good works. When the suffering members of Christ are wearied with spiritual contests and temptations here, let this remaining rest be present to their minds

Multitudes have already conquered, and have entered into its enjoyment. And they may also participate in all that it can give. But then they must endure with fidelity, through every dispensation, and contend with the power of sin with unfailing perseverance. They must be vigilant through every season, and hope and quietly wait for the end proposed. But how great is the encouragement which is offered in Christ to this perseverance in our warfare! The Lord Jesus is watching over every event of our lives. He searches our hearts; and sees, and accepts, all our desires and motives for good, even though we are unable to bring them to a successful action. Often perhaps, while the world scoffs and condemns, he can say,—It is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. He accepts, though men condemn. With this prospect of rest in our warfare, we are encouraged to fight a good fight,—to keep the faith,—to finish our course, and to lay hold upon the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus; and in the midst of conflict, to look forward to the peacefulness of spirit which shall come to us from Him, when we depart to be with Christ.

It is a rest of *perfect satisfaction* in the knowledge and enjoyment of God our Saviour; a state of entire peace, in regard to our view of Christ, and his glorious Gospel. Believers are here, in the posture of the cherubim over the mercy-seat, desiring to look farther into the character, and work, and will of the Lord of all. There is vast mystery in the revelations of God; mystery which is inevitable from the nature of the things revealed, and of the beings to whom they are revealed.

And the man who rejects from his faith in the Bible, every thing which he cannot now understand, shows an entire ignorance of the actual character and nature of the Being with whom he has to do. The Gospel contains many mysteries of wisdom, which cannot be made intelligible to us now, from our total want of capacity to comprehend them. Many things which were obscure to the feeble mind of childhood, have become quite intelligible in maturer age. Many things which are wholly obscure to the natural mind, are made clear and open, by the divine teaching, to the spiritual mind. And in the same way, many things which we know not now, we shall know hereafter. There will be a fulness of knowledge of revealed truth, to the man with Christ, of which we can now form no conception. There is also vast mystery in the Providence of God,—mystery which no human mind can unravel. And the attempt to detail the wise and perfect scheme upon which it is made to operate, is utterly vain. These mysteries fill the mind of an inquiring man with restlessness, and strong desire for the hour of explanation. “I have a wonderful curiosity,” said my dying father to me, “to see what there is in another world.” The believer in Jesus looks beyond the present restless state, to a time when he shall forever enjoy the calm and sure rest of perfect satisfaction and knowledge. We shall see face to face, what we now see through a clouded and often distorting glass. We shall know as perfectly as we are known, what we are now able to know only in part. We shall see the king in His beauty ; the beauty of His person,

the beauty of His character, the beauty of His government, the beauty of His redemption; beauty which all His now visible works vainly attempt to illustrate and display. The sun, the lily, and the rose, but feebly betoken the perfect excellence of the Sun of Righteousness, the lily of the valley, the rose of Sharon. Then He will appear from Zion in perfect beauty. All that is now obscure, will then be made plain. The veil which now covers the excelling glory shall then be rent asunder; and from it, what resplendent light shall shine back upon all the mysteries of Providence and revelation!—what penetrating beams illuminate the deepest recesses of redeeming love! What abundant glory shall gather from the whole, around the throne of God! As if new worlds of suns and planets clothed with meridian splendour, were instantly called into being, to fill up that which was the dark void of midnight before! Are our minds here often clouded, sometimes almost unbelieving? Are our views often confused and unsatisfying? Let us remember the far better part has not yet been manifested to the struggling people of God. With faith in the truth and fidelity of God, let us commit secret things to Him, and by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality; and wait with desire and confidence, for the hour which He has appointed, for the glorious exhibition of things before concealed. Then, when we are glorified with Christ, shall we adore the greatness of His wisdom, and join with rapture in the song, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty,—just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints.”

CHAPTER XIV.

HOLINESS. REMOVAL OF OBSTACLES.

THE Christian with Christ, is in a state of transcendant enjoyment and glory. Of this eternal, unchanging glory, we are now speaking. We have considered it as a state of rest for the believer who is now in a condition of conflict and suffering. It is a permanent spiritual rest for every weary, heavy-laden soul; a rest in which all the Christian's trials shall have passed away, and complete satisfaction shall have been obtained for every desire and every hope.

I wish now to consider this state of glory under another aspect, as a state of *unchanging holiness*;—a view which will apply to the Christian, as he is here struggling with the influence and power of sin. He is here but partially sanctified. He is in a very small degree conformed to the image of God, and hoping for a work of grace which is to be carried on triumphantly for him unto the day of the Lord Jesus. In his present condition, God is beginning to make all things new within him,—transforming him in the renewing of his mind after the likeness of Christ. To be holy, as God is holy, perfectly possessed of the mind which was in Christ, he must wait

until in another state of being, mortality is swallowed up of life. This is his blessed prospect and hope. To be with Christ is to be in a state of unchanging holiness. This is a most important point for our consideration, in connection with this great subject.

In order to obtain adequate and enlightened views of this point, we must mark distinctly what we mean by the holiness of a Christian. It is the restoration to his soul of the perfect image of God. It is the entire conformity of his whole character, will, and desires, to the pure and perfect commandments of the Most High. It is a personal inherent purity and rectitude of affection and principle, produced within him by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling within him. It is a progressive growing up of his renewed nature, into the spotless likeness of Christ his Lord. Its commencement in the heart, is in the hour when the heart is first brought from the power of Satan in reconciliation unto God. Then man is born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible;—even the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. Its progress is through the whole course of a life of obedience on earth, in a steady, constant increase of divine power and influence. Its growth and manifestation depend upon the increasing influence of the Divine Spirit, given and exercised in proportion to the increasing desires and diligence of those in whom He dwells. This progress is often retarded, perhaps may seem sometimes almost arrested, by the power of indwelling sin. But it is still growing in the whole history of its course,

like the grain of mustard seed, to an overspreading tree, until it gains its full and everlasting perfection in a world which is suited to its maturity. This is Christian holiness; the renewal of the soul after the image and will of God. In the present world, it is comparatively weak and partial. In the world to come, it is dominant, universal, and perpetual. The Christian in Christ, is holy, but in a limited measure. The Christian with Christ, is holy to the utmost extent of his capacity. Here, he is really, but, partially, only in his measure and degree, conformed to the will of God. There, he will be fully like God, and like Him forever. To be with Christ, is to be in this unchanging state of holiness.

There, all *obstacles* to the Christian's conformity to God will be removed forever. In the present world, the obstacles to the cultivation of personal holiness are great and numerous. The grace of God in the heart of man, is a tender plant in a strange unkindly soil. It is easily checked in its operation and growth; and demands, for its continuance in life, constant divine watchfulness, and unceasing human earnestness and care. It is exposed to many dangers, from within and from without. And every man, who will live godly in Christ Jesus, finds multiplied calls upon him for earnest and assiduous effort, to retain and cultivate within himself the spirit of pure and increasing piety.

Many of these obstacles arise from the nature of the *society* in which the Christian now dwells. This world is a fallen world; and the principles and motives which naturally govern mankind, are

not essentially altered by a succession of generations, or change of climates. Lot's righteous soul was vexed from day to day in Sodom, by the ungodly deeds of those with whom he dwelt. And in our age and land, all who desire to live separate from sin, and to walk with God in newness of life, must experience the very same probation. Evil examples, and pernicious principles and maxims for human conduct, everywhere prevail, around every disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Men are seen to rule by the law of wickedness. The great majority of mankind are found by universal concession, to be deeply corrupted. Innumerable precedents for conduct which is known to be against the will of God, are established by the customs of human society. The man of God must often stem an exceedingly heavy and rapid current, if he hold on his way in faithful obedience to the Lord who has called him to His service. He often finds himself in such situations and relations in life, that no sorrow seems to him greater, and no punishment would be more dreadful, than the obligation to dwell in such society forever. To maintain the spirit and habits of piety in such a condition, is like keeping a spark alive in the midst of the ocean.

If we look off from the world, to the professing church, even there society offers numerous obstacles to the growth of holiness in the heart. Many who profess their subjection to the high principles and standard of the Gospel, live very far below the high vocation wherewith they are called. A worldly, covetous, or giddy spirit distinguishes them, by very peculiar and distressing acts of in-

consistency and folly. They become an evident and an exceeding evil attaching itself to the professed body of Christ. It is far too often the fact, whether the Christian associate with those within or those without the professed communion of the followers of Christ, that the chief influence arising from such intercourse, is to lead him to a contentment with a low standard of piety, and to aim at nothing beyond what they have attained and practised. The frequent mingling in society, except for the purposes of positive usefulness to others, very rarely promotes, and far more frequently hinders, the growth of grace in the Christian's heart. Much experience of this difficulty compels him to retreat, as much as possible, from his contests with outward things, wearied with every aspect of human society, to seek for strength and refreshment at home, in secret with his Lord.

Many obstacles to the Christian's personal holiness arise from the circumstances of his present being, the condition in which it has been the will of God to place him in preparation for eternity. He has here perhaps to labour for his bread with the sweat of his brow ;—to obtain sometimes by exceeding and unremitting toil, the means of living for himself and others. If this be his dispensation, he finds lurking beneath this necessity, a worldly and gainful spirit, which attempts to justify itself in an excessive pursuit of earthly things, by this necessity which appears to cover it. If, on the other hand, the Divine Providence has abundantly blessed him by the labours of others ; by the gift of fields and vineyards which he hath not planted ; in the very comforts of his station,—in the oppor-

tunities which it affords for luxury, indulgence, and ease,—there is found a still more dangerous obstacle to his growth in holiness. Pride of heart, rebellion against God, and forgetfulness of eternity, naturally spring for him, out of fulness of bread and abundance of idleness. Then again, he has to support his present existence, by an adequate indulgence of natural appetite; and he finds a stumbling-block for his soul continually set, in the spirit of intemperance and excess which hides itself under every natural and lawful gratification of sense. The dividing limit between that which is necessary and expedient, and that which is unnecessary and inordinate, it is often exceedingly difficult to settle. Again, he has many causes for anxiety in earthly things; obliged to judge and act for himself, in many changing and perplexing concerns of life; and often at a loss in what direction he shall move with safety. Disappointments are in every path, and often mar his most fairly formed plans. Distresses arise from quarters wholly unexpected, and in a shape extremely painful to bear. In these circumstances, there is much to provoke the spirit of fretfulness and discontent; much to lead his soul ungratefully away from God. All these are very serious obstacles to the growth of personal holiness. And whatever peculiarities there may be in the circumstances of his station, they will each be found to furnish their several obstacles to the progress of the work of grace within him. Difficulties are thus unceasingly arising, from the condition of being in which God has been pleased to place him, which are calcu-

lated very much to retard the progress and power of true religion in his heart. Prosperity and adversity, poverty and wealth, health and sickness, each in its turn, cover the varied devices of Satan against his soul. And he is taught by this experience, that piety does not depend upon any peculiar condition in life ; and that it is not to be maintained in any condition, without a constant and serious contest with many and great obstacles to the growth of holiness within him.

Many of these obstacles arise also from the depraved tendencies of his own nature. Foreign enemies to his soul have always the countenance and assistance of a secret foe within his own heart. The imaginations of the thoughts of his heart are naturally, and only, evil continually. And it requires great effort, and constant government and determination to fix them, in any measure, upon that which is good. There is a pride of reason which resists captivity to faith ; a pride of will, which refuses subjection to the will of Christ ; and a rebellion of appetite which rejects the restraint and control of divine commands. With all his watchfulness and effort to purify the fountains of his soul, there are unceasingly bubbling up from the deep recesses of its corruptions, purposes and imaginations which he utterly abhors. If he become heedless in cleansing this source of the issues of his life, the whole mass is not slow in becoming corrupted, beyond the power of restoration. The Spirit of God must both cleanse him from secret faults, and keep him back from presumptuous sins, or else they will get the dominion over him, and he becomes not

innocent even from the great offence. This inward obstacle to his personal holiness, remains through the whole course of his probation here. When can he say,—or who can say, “I have made myself clean from my transgression?” Its influence is often extremely depressing, and the contest which it requires, becomes in the highest degree wearisome. But it is one of the instruments by which God is pleased to humble and correct him; and by the very resistance to his holiness of character which it presents, and which he is made to overcome, it really promotes it.

With these three classes of obstacles to his growth in holiness, the Christian in a state of grace must unceasingly contend. How great their influence is in hindering him from an obedience to the truth, can hardly be estimated. Under all circumstances, they are a weight which he cannot easily throw aside. They sometimes become a difficulty so serious, that they cause him to fall, and sadly to grieve the Holy Spirit, whereby he is sealed unto the day of redemption. But all these obstacles are peculiar to his present state. From the Christian with Christ, they are removed forever. All opposition to his growth in grace, his increase in conformity to God, has been taken away; and the principle of holiness implanted by the Holy Spirit within his heart, the renewing of his nature which he has received from God, goes forward in an unchanging advance, throughout eternity.

He is brought into society, in which there is no example of evil, no influence of rebellious principle, no low or partial standard of conformity

to God. No angel or blessed spirit shall ever say to him, "Who is the Lord, that we should serve Him? Come, let us break His bonds asunder, and cast away His cords from us." Had he the principle of disobedience still remaining within him, there would be no companion for his crime, and no room to bring it into action and effect. He cannot desire an elevation in the service of his Lord, for which he will not find an example in beings around him, and the utmost encouragement and assistance in realizing it in his own experience. All external influence over him, will be of the happiest and purest kind; and all society around him will be adapted to impart this perfect character to his own mind.

He can be in no circumstances which will ever excite him to disobedience again. The condition in which he is placed, will be only and wholly, favourable to a growth in every virtue and every grace. There will be no cause for anxiety or fretfulness; no root to bear gall or wormwood; no unhallowed appetite to seek the cloak of outward necessity; no exposure to harassing disappointments. Where all wants are supplied,—all weaknesses made up,—all fears removed; and no event can arise in the progress of experience to give shape or colour to the spirit of transgression,—which is the blessed condition of the Christian with Christ,—what further opening or inducement to sin can be found, in any of his outward relations or circumstances?

From within himself, there will spring no further obstacle to his growing and eternal holiness. Every sinful propensity which has arisen from a

body material and corruptible, will have ceased to exist when that body shall have become incorruptible and spiritual forever. The children of the resurrection, equal unto the angels, neither buy, nor sell, nor eat, nor drink, nor marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they sin nor die any more. The appetites of sense, and the infirmities of the flesh, have passed away with the perishing body to which they belonged. The spiritual iniquities of the soul, the pride, envy, and rebellion which have been the plague of the corrupted nature of man, shall have no more dominion there. The spirit of man shall be subdued to the will, and raised to the image of Christ. He shall follow none other than the Lamb forever, and shall seek for no enjoyment or provisions, but the hidden manna, and the living fountains of water, which the Glorious Lamb shall have provided for him. The whole of man will be cleansed by the Divine Spirit and power of God; and be completely restored to God, to be His temple and His possession forever.

For the Christian with Christ, there will be a permanent removal of all obstacles to his growth in holiness. By this he becomes secured in an eternal progression towards God, and an eternally increasing conformity in himself to the image and will of God. The principle of a new nature was implanted within him before, though it was exceedingly kept down by encompassing difficulties and temptations. Now all these difficulties are removed, and these temptations have passed away, and it becomes immediately the predominant principle. It rules the whole character, and

brings every thought and feeling into perfect and lasting subordination to itself. Dwelling in a state of perfect liberty, and of perfect adaptation to its fruitfulness and maturity, it can expand at pleasure, and bring forth abundant fruit to the everlasting glory of God. The Christian's glory is thus the perfection of the Christian's grace. To be with Christ in a state of recompense, is the ripened fruit, and the accomplished result of being in Christ in a state of probation. The imperfections of grace in its development and exhibition on earth, arise from no imperfection in its own nature, but from the many obstacles with which it must contend. The sunbeam is equally pure and perfect, whether it shine upon a clod, or a diamond. The power of reflection is in the object itself. Happy is the thought, that every aspect of the believer with Christ, will present an additional beautiful and perfect reflection of the glory of his Lord. And when all these obstacles are forever removed, grace will flourish in everlasting perfection; and the renewed nature of man will become permanently and perfectly holy. There will be nothing to interfere with its constant and happy approximation to the perfect likeness of the Lord of all. Like a river which has passed all the obstructions of its mountainous origin, and is flowing in a calm, full, and even current to the ocean, the redeemed soul shall flow on, in an increasing conformity to God, expanding itself in a fuller current of joy, as it approaches daily more near to the perfect fulness of the Deity.

This is a very partial view of the Christian's

state of glory, as a state of holiness. But it is also a very important view. The removal of present obstacles is of unspeakable moment to the future conquest and growth of the Christian. The positive aids and encouragements to a growth in personal holiness, which are furnished to a redeemed soul in the kingdom of glory, and which we will proceed to consider, are of still greater importance. But how really encouraging to the contending servants of God, is the present view!—While the true members of Christ are daily fighting with foes on every side, they are bid to remember that their present warfare is temporary, and its result of victory is certain. Look up then, Christian believers, and lift up your heads; and be not slack or faithless in pressing forward to the triumph before you. Soon shall come your last contest with every enemy, when the full power of Satan shall be bruised under your feet. God is thus sifting the chaff from His precious grain within you, and making you daily more ready for His garner, and more precious in His sight. In this contest, the Saviour becomes daily more desirable and valuable in your esteem; you feel your need of Him, and you learn to rest upon Him, and to count upon Him as your all. As each successive victory is gained by His power, there remains the less to do and suffer; and the crown of the work approaches more nearly, and shines more attractively before you. Press onward then, encouraged and upheld by the hope before you. God will make you conquerors over all.

But in concluding our view of this branch of our subject, a painful thought presses itself upon the

mind, that so many actually love all these obstacles to the holiness of their characters, and the submission of their hearts to God, and have no desire to give them up. The sinfulness of human society,—its giddy neglect of God,—its short-lived deceptions,—its vain self-devotion; all these constitute to their minds a charm, which they do not wish to relinquish. That all these things within them and around them are not of the Father, but of the world, gives them no concern or sorrow. Like the maniac in his cell, their fancy can convert chains of bondage into ornaments of honour, and straws into sceptres. How sad is this aspect of the character of man to those who truly estimate his condition, and look surely forward to its necessary result in a world to come! O, let me speak to such among my readers, with seriousness and solemnity! I would arouse them from their delusions. I would awaken them to behold themselves in the light of truth, as God sees them. I would array before them the prospect of eternity. I would show them the real influence of the follies which they love so much. But perhaps it is not light and knowledge which they need, so much as a will to improve the blessings which are really so freely bestowed upon them. They are throwing away inestimable gifts from God;—gifts of mercy, upon the loss of which they will hereafter look back with the bitterest regret; and deprived of which, they must sink into sorrow and condemnation for eternity. When will they be wise? When will scorners cease their refusal of pardoning love? And lovers of the world be-

come the lovers of God and of His Christ? O, may the Divine Spirit arouse all who read these lines, to fly from this chosen guilt and folly of unconverted man, with a new and obedient heart to Jesus Christ the Lord, both theirs and ours.

CHAPTER XV.

AIDS TO HOLINESS.

THE Christian's state of glory as a state of unchangeable holiness, is the particular point for our present consideration. We have spoken of the removal there, of all the obstacles which are here found to oppose the growth of the soul in grace. Let us now consider some of the positive *aids* and *advantages* to a life of pure and perfect obedience to God, which are also there presented.

Every instrument and influence which can promote the life and power of true piety in the heart, shall be there present and prevailing. The importance of this view of our subject is very manifest. The experience of every Christian declares, and the character and attainments of every Christian show, how much the growth of the soul in holiness in the present life, depends upon the kind of influence which is exercised upon it from abroad. Take from the holiest follower of the Lord Jesus upon the earth, all the ordinances and means of the Gospel,—all opportunities of private, personal communion with God,—all the society of those who love God, and delight to speak of God ;—let him hear nothing of his be-

loved Saviour, or of his amazing works of grace ;—let him find no companion who shall take sweet counsel together with him, and go to the house of God in company ;—let him have no associates who fear God ;—let there be none of the excellent of the earth in whom he shall find delight ;—and how bleak and barren would his present life become, as a state of grace, and of increasing conformity to God ! How evidently would his strength flag, and his heart grow cold, and his spirit sink in negligence and lethargy, in this mere deprivation of outward influence adapted to encourage and edify him in his path of spiritual obedience to God ! But add to this deprivation, so serious and painful, the entire removal of that divine influence from heaven, without which nothing is strong, nothing is holy ;—let no refreshing dew from God descend upon his soul ;—let the sanctifying Spirit of truth and holiness arise and depart, like an eagle toward heaven ; and how certainly would this deprivation cut him off from the possibility of eternal life ! He would relapse again from absolute necessity, into a state of positive and final hardness of heart, under an everlasting condemnation and curse. The presence and power of the Sun of Righteousness would have been removed, and universal spiritual congelation and perpetual death would be the inevitable result.

It is not enough, therefore, that obstacles to holiness be removed. There must be also an added excitement and strength given from on high, to enable the Christian to obey and glorify God in the spirit and habit of personal holiness.

The universal experience of the church of Jesus testifies, that His people improve in holiness, and ripen in conformity to God, in proportion as they abundantly enjoy the sanctified opportunities of the appointed means of grace. Frequency in private and social prayer, sincerity and freedom in religious conversation, constancy and interest in studying the word of God, habitual participation in the public institutions and privileges of the Gospel, are the instruments by which the Divine Spirit habitually enlightens, animates, and sanctifies the servants of God, in their progressive submission to the Lord's will. Upon the operation of these instruments, under His blessing, their growth in grace is made to depend; and in the degree in which they are employed with a true and assiduous heart, do the children of God grow in personal piety, and go on from strength to strength, towards the presence and kingdom of their Heavenly Father.

But the spiritual growth which is thus excited for the man in Christ, here in an uncongenial soil and climate, under an artificial heat, like an exotic plant in the conservatory,—in another world, in a state of recompense and glory with Christ, becomes perfectly natural and unforced. The plant of beauty and renown has been transplanted to its own clime, and strikes its roots deeply amidst the welcome soil of its native hills. And thus, beyond the negative advantage in the removal of all present obstacles to the Christian's holiness, there is added also, the actual presence and operation of every influence which can purify the

soul, and quicken it in a life of unrelaxing and eternal obedience to God.

For the Christian with Christ, there is all the influence of *holy society*, in the highest and purest degree. How precious and important is this fact, may be readily seen. Even were the principle of sin still existing in the soul, it could never be exhibited, where every being among countless millions, would silently and instantly frown it down, in the purity of his own example. The white robes of heaven are but emblematic of the more spotless character of the glorified saints by whom they are worn. Their external glory, shining above the splendour of the sun, is but significant of the far higher brightness of a mind perfectly renewed for God. The believer's intercourse with all around him there, is adapted and calculated, to stimulate and encourage him, to forget the things which are behind, and to reach forward to those which are before, pressing on forever to the mark of the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

The redeemed saint has there, the perpetual society of his glorified Lord. He follows Him, dwells in His presence, beholds His face, and hears His voice, with unceasing and inexpressible delight. The presence and society of the Saviour, is to him, the awakening and all-conquering stimulant to perpetual obedience and love. Even in the present life, while the principle of transgression is still abiding within his heart, and unnumbered temptations to indulge it are ever around him, how sanctifying and powerful would be the personal society of the Lord

Jesus! How certainly would he be restrained and kept back, even from secret sin, if this shining, spotless Saviour, were ever at his side; following whithersoever he went; exhorting, admonishing, advising, encouraging him in every path of duty, and in every hour of temptation; and casting upon him continually, the piercing look of reproof, or the beaming smile of approbation, as reproof or approbation were severally required! This presence of Christ is now, in fact, the great instrument of encouraging him to obedience, as it is realized and perceived by faith, in the midst of temptations and infirmities. But there, the Christian will gain the whole benefit of this divine presence, in actual manifest reality, without the counteracting principle of sin within him, to be overruled and checked by influence from without. The smile of Jesus will reward for every effort which is made to honour Him; and His word of approval will abundantly excite to new desires and exertions to do His will. And while the Christian beholds Him as He is,—so attractive, so lovely, so desirable will His perfect character appear to be, that it will be the prevailing, uniform wish of the soul, to be more and more like Him forever. This personal society of the Adorable Saviour, as a familiar friend, as a known and beloved benefactor, as the source of all his joys;—the Lord by whom he has been redeemed from eternal death,—will be to him, the union of all motives, exciting him to an eternal, unchanging progress in the conformity of his soul to God.

The redeemed saint will also have the society

of angelic beings. The New Testament gives us delightful views of the eternal union which shall subsist between all classes of holy beings with Christ, in one family under Him. Angels have been always obedient to the will of God, and spotless from sin since the hour of their creation. The image of God there remains original and untarnished. And the Christian will see in every one of them, the living, perfect example of what God requires him to be. Their love, and zeal, and ardour, and disinterestedness; their watchfulness for divine commands, and their eagerness to obey them; will show him in every succeeding hour, what he was originally designed to be, and for what, he has since been redeemed from the power and dominion of sin. This will be a bright and lovely pattern always before him, and be rendered perfectly accessible to his imitation. Their conversation, their instructions, their history of past ages of grace, their animating appeals to his heart, to give glory to God and the Lamb,—as they surround the redeemed ones who encompass the throne,—will excite and encourage him, with them, to mount up with wings as an eagle, to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint, in the way of divine commands.

Besides these, he will have the society of all redeemed saints. Every quarter of this fallen world will have its representation in a world of glory. All nations, kindreds, tongues and people shall be collected there, to sing the song of Moses and the Lamb. With a voice like the noise of waters, or the voice of many thunders, will they surround the throne of Him who has loved them,

and washed them from their sins in His own blood. In them shall be seen the full manifestation of the power of divine grace. They were all once, fallen in sin,—vile, destitute, and polluted. They are all now, raised in holiness,—shining, glorious, and happy. How various have been the instruments, by which they were brought to God! How great the change which has been accomplished in the character and condition of each. How wonderful to all, the grace which has been thus severally bestowed! What Christ has done for them and for all, will fill their souls with the universal harmony and elevation of praise. How exciting to a continual progress in obedience, will be the example of each ransomed soul, and the retrospective view which each will take of the wonderful works of God! When the Christian mingles in this glorious society,—when he sits down with Abraham, the friend of God, to hear from his own lips, the story of his faith, over which he has so often meditated, with the most humble and earnest desire to imitate his example; or listens to Paul, the chosen vessel by whose heavenly writings he has been so much admonished and comforted on earth; or unites with the multitude of later witnesses, who counted nothing dear to them for Christ's sake, and who freely poured forth their lives for the honour of His name;—what animation will fill his mind!—what joys will enlarge his heart!—what ardent desires will inspire him to grow up with them still more and more, in conformity to the pure and perfect image of the Most High God! How intensely will he strive to copy their example, and like

them, with still enlarging capacities, to stand forever perfect in all the will of God !

Such will be the whole influence of society around the man who is with Christ. There can be nothing there which is not spiritually improving. Every outward influence is adapted to purify and exalt. And the whole assemblage of things abroad, constitutes an unceasing and important aid to the unchanging holiness of the redeemed saint. When he enters upon that heavenly scene, what wonder and joy will fill his soul ! All beings employed for one Ruler ; no discord, variance, or reserve, in the employment of any ; all faces beaming happiness and peace ; all tongues united in praise ;—" Glory, glory be to God on High," echoing in the sweetest melody from every quarter of the Father's kingdom. How lovely and attractive will that spotless obedience appear, which fills them all with joy ! How ardent and constraining will be the desire of the Christian, never to be separated from associates so holy, and so improving ! How certain will be his growth in piety, amidst a world of beings whose whole influence is so calculated to advance it !

Then the Christian with Christ, will also have the *immediate and full influence of the Holy Spirit* shining upon his soul, without any thing within him or around him, calculated to resist, or to pervert His power. In his present life, this sacred influence is given to him, but in a partial degree, and is often quenched, and grieved, and driven away. But even here, this divine influence is the source of all the holiness he has. There is

nothing within him acceptable to God, which has not been produced by the power of this Sacred Comforter. This heavenly influence is bestowed upon the followers of Christ, in very different degrees, and the exceeding value of His operations is in the character of some, beautifully and powerfully displayed. But never, save upon one Being in the form of man, has the Spirit of God been poured out without measure. And how glorious was that exhibition of an Incarnate Saviour! How holy and perfect did this unmeasured gift make that tried and conquering Being to appear! He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. There was no guile or stain in Him. He was unceasingly benevolent, and loving, and useful to all. The holiness of heaven is perfect conformity to this image of Christ. And when the Divine Spirit shines with His noontide radiance upon the redeemed soul, as He did upon the Lord Jesus when He was upon the earth, and there is no sinful propensity within, and no temptation around, to draw the soul from under the full operation of His grace, what shall arrest the unchanging progress in holiness, which is the natural fruit of His influence? How would such a flood of purifying grace cleanse even the pollutions of earth, and make this fallen world, a world in which righteousness should dwell alone! It is not a change of place alone, but the change of character and relations which constitutes the Christian's heaven. And while under the partial and interrupted influences of the Holy Spirit here, he is constantly gaining this change of character, and increasingly be-

coming a partaker of the divine nature ;—with Christ in a world of glory, the full and uninterrupted influence of this Spirit resting unceasingly upon his soul, shall secure to him this blessed change of character, perfectly and forever, and make him awake up after the spotless likeness of his glorious Lord.

The Christian with Christ, will have the support derived from *unceasing religious occupation*. This is a most important element of holiness. The inhabitants of a world of glory rest not day and night, in the delightful worship and praise of Him who hath washed them from their sins in His own blood, and made them kings and priests unto God. To do His perfect will, and to honour His glorious name, has become their employment and their delight. Their natures are completely purified. They have no thought that wanders from God. They therefore find no weariness, but new and increasing rapture, in their songs of harmony and love. Their whole souls, and all that is within them, are given up to the glorious work of praising God for His goodness, and declaring the wonders which He hath done for the children of men. This constitutes a perfect atmosphere of purity,—an unceasing excitement to ardent and active obedience to the great Ruler of all. In this present life, the Christian grows in holiness in proportion as he improves the means of grace, and of spiritual occupation. Religious duty is a most important instrument of improving religious character. But here, it is often found that the spirit is willing, while the flesh is weak. The Christian cannot do the things that he would.

He is wearied and worn out by the very service in which he delights. Sometimes it is impossible for him to watch with the Saviour, even for one hour. He deeply feels the injurious influence of this infirmity; and mourns exceedingly over his involuntary lethargy, dulness and sloth. How often does his flagging, contending spirit cry out, when bearing these burdens which he cannot cast off, "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I fly away, and be at rest!" He longs to love without distraction, to praise without weariness, to serve with an undivided heart. But still, even in the midst of all these hindrances and burdens, he grows in grace, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit, in his religious occupations, sometimes largely and richly. But when he shall be with Christ, he will have all the advantages of spiritual and holy occupation, without any of the drawbacks of infirmity and sin. He will be able to realize the full benefit of all these instruments of spiritual communion with the source of all holiness and truth, which the Lord has established in heaven, as upon the earth, as channels to the redeemed soul of the water of life and salvation. He will abide in the service of his Lord, obeying His commandments, fulfilling His will. And unceasingly engaged in holy occupation, with a mind and heart perfectly attuned to its pleasures, and its improving influence; he shall be growing in holiness, and in perfectness of conformity to the Lord of all.

It is thus the gracious will of God, that His servant should become perfectly holy in the divine presence of his Lord. When with Christ,

every sinful trait, propensity, and habit of his nature, shall be laid aside;—his immortal spirit shall be delivered from all fleshly weights, and he shall rejoice in an everlasting conformity to the image and the mind of his Creator. Surely, we may say of this blessed and glorious arrangement for the Christian's bliss, "it is far better." Far better than the highest privileges we can possibly enjoy upon the earth, under any circumstances of spiritual advantage. What view of Jesus given to the soul here, even in its highest possible elevation, is to be compared with the unveiled glory in which He there continually shines before His people. They are the wonders of Mount Tabor, made the daily experience of his admiring saints; while the deep feeling of every soul shall constantly utter forth the testimony, "it is good for us to be here." What earthly fellowship among the people of God below, at all approaches the power of spiritual communion with saints and angels in the tabernacle of the Redeemer above? What divine influence of the Spirit here, is to be compared with the full and eternal presence of the Holy Ghost upon the redeemed soul in its world of glory? What spiritual employment on earth, can so influence and sanctify the nature of man as the everlasting occupations of the heavenly family? And as we look upward and forward to this eternal and excelling glory, and compare it with the highest, brightest, and best advantages of the spiritual life on earth, we may cheerfully and fully adopt the Apostle's conclusion, "which is far better." O, let our hopes and efforts be proportionate to

our privileges! With bright and clear views of the foundation on which we rest,—with animating anticipations of the result which we are approaching; let us press forward to a home of eternal glory,—striving daily to become in tastes and habits, more and more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Remember that our rest with Jesus is a rest of perfect holiness, and our only education for its enjoyment, and approach to its perfections, is in our continual increase in personal holiness in conformity to the image and will of our Lord Jesus Christ. There “Christ is all.” The very atmosphere of His habitation is one of unalloyed spiritual health, because He is there. All that can promote and attract love for Him, the very essence and principle of true piety, will exercise its power there. New discoveries of His divine excellence will awaken new devotion. Increasing capacity, and power of perception, will enable the Christian to appreciate and enjoy them all. The very habit of unrestrained and unforbidden love, will grow upon him in a daily increase of power. His whole effort, encouraged, aided, and upheld by all that he sees, and hears, and does, will be to become holy as God is holy, that he may be happy in the enjoyment of Him forever. In an atmosphere so genial and perfect, his own character, purified from sin, and enlightened with truth, shall flourish in undecaying youth, and eternal loveliness. Every obstacle to his growth in grace upon the earth shall have been removed, and every means which was divinely appointed to lead him on to God, shall be increased and

perfected in its influence ; and he shall be secured with Christ, in a state of unchanging holiness, and released from the further possibility of sin.

How unspeakable are the privileges of the real members of Christ, who have passed from death unto life, in the renewal of their souls by His power ! All things are theirs. The present joys of a Saviour's service, repay for all the sacrifices which they ever make for Him ; and beyond the highest of these, God has provided such good things as pass man's understanding, to be revealed in a world to come. How precious and important is the privilege of being in Christ ! He will give grace and glory ; and no good thing will He withhold from those who live a godly life

CHAPTER XVI.

HEAVENLY JOY.

HAVING considered the rest and the holiness of the man with Christ, I propose now to speak of his condition, as one of glory and joy. To enter upon such a theme, however, seems to be in a great degree presumptuous. But our attempt to consider the condition of the saint with Christ in its other aspects, makes an effort necessary to say something also of this amazing and exalted topic. Flesh and blood cannot inherit this glory. Earthly vision cannot discern it. Human language has no power adequately to utter or describe it. Some of the first privileged disciples of the Lord were permitted to behold the vast provisions of this glorified joy, in a divine revelation. But in their attempts to convey some views to others, of what they had been permitted to witness in the realms of glory, all instruments of communication seem to be in vain. Three of the chosen followers of the Lord, saw His glory for a season on the mount of transfiguration. But when they come to describe the glorious vision, it is all done in relative earthly comparisons, each of which flags and fails, in the effort to convey some adequate image of that which they beheld. "His face," say they, in speaking

of their Lord, “did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them.” It was “the glory,” says one of them, “of the only begotten of the Father.” It was “the power and coming,” says another,—or the revelation in glory,—“of our Lord Jesus Christ;” we “were eye-witnesses of His majesty.” The atmosphere around them seemed a shining cloud, the very glory of which, as it overshadowed them, made them afraid. Another of these chosen messengers of the Lord, was “caught up into the third heavens.” Whether he was in the body, or out of the body, he could not tell; but all that he could say of this heavenly abode was, that he heard unspeakable words, which it is not possible for man to utter. When he would describe its state, it was a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. When he would speak of its blessedness, he declares it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. Its possession was an overwhelming of every thing that man had before called joy, as in an ocean of eternal bliss,—“a swallowing up of mortality in life;”—a condition of joint heirship with Christ in glory, in the view of which, any sufferings of this present life, were not worthy of notice;—the far better part, for the clothing of which in full possession, he longed with earnest desires and groans. By another of these privileged servants who had beheld the remaining glory, it is described as an incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading inheritance, reserved in heaven for the suffering but protected

people of God ;—a crown of unfading, amaranthine glory. Another heaps up amazing expressions of exalted aspects and attributes, to convey some idea of what he saw, in the revelation of the heavenly home :—The glory of the meridian sun ;—the intense brightness of the furnace ;—the pure radiance of the light ;—the transparent beauty of the rainbow ;—an ocean of gold, translucent as the crystal ;—precious stones, of every hue, and of the richest forms ;—fountains, ever sparkling with living water ;—streams, with an unceasing flow of perfect purity ;—trees of unchanging verdure, clothed with endless varieties of beautiful fruit ;—living beings, of the noblest and most exalted aspect, clad in garments which earthly art in vain would imitate ;—music, of the tenderest influence and of the most overwhelming power ; sometimes the single melody of a heavenly harp and voice, and again flowing forth in a volume of harmony, like approaching thunders, or the majestic waterfall, or the mysterious rolling of the sea ;—a state of being, in its aspect of loveliness, feebly illustrated by the most perfect bridal beauty and purity of earth. All these, and many like them, are efforts to express to man, the things which he saw and heard. But they are all in vain. One sentence of his own conclusion sums up his acknowledged inability to describe the glory of the saints with Christ :—“ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is.”

How shall I attempt then to speak of the joy

and glory of this heavenly state? Yet we are invited to consider it, to look forward to it, to desire it, and to seek and strive to gain it. Let us then attempt to utter some views of it, which may be instructive and encouraging to the people of God. We will speak of the joy and glory of the Christian with Christ, as he views the *past*, the *present*, and the *future*, in his exalted state.

As he looks upon the past, there is an entire passing away, of all the sorrows and trials of his previous condition. His consciousness of this is a source of unspeakable joy. How gratefully and triumphantly he looks back upon the way through which God hath led him, in his journey to his heavenly rest! His former condition was full of varied burdens and cares. He has suffered much in bodily pain amidst the infirmities of his mortal state;—much in the anxieties of poverty and earthly destitution;—much in the sorrows of his family and friends around him;—much in the separation from him in death, of those whom he tenderly and ardently loved;—much in the griefs and distresses of others, which he in vain desired and attempted to allay;—much in the misrepresentations and reproaches, not only of the worldly on earth, but even of those who in their Christian profession, ought to have been brethren and friends in kindness to him;—much in the ingratitude and cruelty, the oppression and hostility which he has endured from men;—much in the anxious suspense with which the future has ever thrust itself upon his view;—much in the constant perception of his own secret sins, in the frequent overwhelming of his holiest purposes

by sudden temptations to transgression ;—much in his inability to accomplish the obedience, or to attain the character, or to maintain the spirit and state of mind which he desired ;—much in his frequent backslidings from his chosen and still desired path, and in his failures in attempted conformity to his Lord ;—much in the constant steps of his passage to the grave ;—much in the fears, and darkness, and doubts, which have so often bewildered and distressed, and sometimes almost overwhelmed and crushed him in his pilgrimage to his home. Upon all these springs and sources of sorrow, he now looks back, with a memory exceedingly enlightened, and a mind highly discriminating. They constitute in his view, a method of divine guidance and preparation of his soul for a heavenly rest, wonderful in its exhibitions of wisdom, power, and love. And alarming and distressing as this system often was, while the cloud was rising, or the storm was raging ; now that it has been completed and gone back never to return, he can admire the beauty which is displayed upon it, and rejoice in a contemplation of the glorious manifestation which it has made of the greatness and goodness of his God. There is, therefore, in the very recollection of all these trials of earth, a joy which could never have been fairly anticipated under their passage. Nothing of the whole system has been in vain. Nothing of it was unnecessary. He who made the Captain of his salvation perfect through earthly sufferings, has thus also led on the sons of God whom He had chosen to be conformed to the image of His only begotten, to their inheri-

tance of glory, in the same needful and sanctifying path. To understand all this, to appreciate its importance, to discern its operation, to perceive its actual result, to comprehend the glory which it has brought to God, and the happiness which it has produced for man ; will doubtless be no small part of the employments and joys of a heavenly abode. It is the peculiar joy of witnessing the triumphant and perfect result of a course of effort, in which the mind and heart have been intensely interested, and the details of which, in their operation, were a constant trial of faith, and patience, and hope. The top-stone of the edifice is now brought out, and it shines in glorious beauty, and no defect can be charged upon the least portion of the structure. The magnificent fruit is now gathered, and it amply confirms the hope, and rewards the labour, of the husbandman who waited long and with patient diligence, to reap his autumnal recompense. The work is now finished. The trial of precious faith has been completed, and it is found according to the promise, unto praise, and honour, and glory, in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The saint may acknowledge with peculiar rapture and thankfulness, in this view of the result of his trials past, "I am one of those who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed my robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb ; therefore am I before the throne of God, and shall serve Him day and night in His temple ; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell with me ; and I shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; neither shall the sun light on

me, nor any heat ; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed me, and shall lead me unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from my eyes." He has now found eternal access to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit ; and he gives unceasing glory unto the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the perfect work of grace and wisdom which has been accomplished for him. His trials have passed away in the entire accomplishment of the purpose for which they were designed. And he has received the full and intended result of triumph and glory, for which they were all contrived and overruled.

But they have also passed as facts and attributes of his own actual condition. There is a perpetual end for him of every shape of suffering and woe. His wants have been all supplied. Hostility and oppression have forever ceased. Persecutions and reproaches can never again be excited against him. No anxieties or deferred hopes, will again harass him. No friends will forsake him, or be taken from him. No temptations will distract him in the service of his God ; or corruptions arise within him, to unsettle or enfeeble his affections or efforts for Him. He hath ceased forever from sin, in every shape and influence. Neither in thought, or appetite, or word, shall the spirit of inward rebellion tempt him more. All these characteristics of his fallen condition have gone by forever. The joy and glory of a perfect and eternal deliverance from them, he only can appreciate, who has struggled and suffered through them, in a sincere and

earnest desire to do the will of God. To such a man, what joy is there, in the simple fact, that sorrow has passed! And when all sorrow has passed, and passed forever, and no future experience of being is to bring out any new trial or grief for the soul, how completely does the view of the past contribute to promote the joy and glory of the servant of God with Christ.

But the past not only contains his own trials and preparation for eternal bliss. It is also charged with the amazing work of God for him. An enlightened memory, now under the immediate teaching and guidance of Christ himself, will recall all the wonderful things which have distinguished the divine interposition in his behalf. New beauties of wisdom and grace will be perceived in every dispensation of his great Creator and King. The creation and government of the heavens and earth which the Sacred Scriptures describe,—the demonstration of the schemes and purposes of an infallible providence of God, which the whole history of man exhibits,—the fixed purpose of His will that all things should work together for good to them that love Him, which has been triumphantly accomplished—shall be spread out before his view, for his contemplation and study. The glorious plan of redeeming mercy, in all its facts, and operations, and results, will arise before him. The love of the Father, the incarnation, submission, death, and triumphs of the Son, and the long-suffering mission and agency of the Holy Ghost, will appear in new and exalted light. How will he meditate then upon the glory of the cross, upon the love of the

Spirit, upon the priesthood of the Saviour ! How filled will memory be of glorious demonstrations of grace, of which, though he knew the facts before, he never perceived or understood the power until now. But the special redemption and conversion of his own soul, with all its attending evidences of love and forbearance in his Saviour, and of ingratitude and resistance in himself,—of tenderness to his infirmities in the Spirit, and of his unfruitfulness under the divine guidance,—of patience with his manifold errors, and triumph over all his sluggishness and hostility, will assuredly arrest and occupy his mind. And in all these remembrances of the past, of the blessings with which it has been filled, and the grace and glory which have crowned it, there will arise to the saint with Christ, unspeakable joy.

But we may speak also of the joys in the *present* condition of the saint with Christ. It is a subject of which we can know but little. I trust it may not be presumptuous to offer a few hints upon it in the little that we do know, such as may naturally and justly arise to the mind. These joys manifestly spring from the condition of perfect adaptation to its wants and capacities, in which a soul perfectly sanctified, and greatly enlarged in its powers, is now placed. There is the joy of perfect confidence in God, the unceasing indulgence and exercise of that filial, trustful spirit, the least bestowal of which on the earth, has made for the saint a heaven in the midst of his extremest trials. It is interrupted by no rebellions, weakened by no doubts, withdrawn by no disappointments, and contending with no ap-

prehensions or fears. Every hour and every experience of an eternal state will bring out a new expression of the sweet consciousness, "As for the Lord, His work is perfect."—"How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty." It is the joy of perfect fellowship with Christ; a fellowship which leads not only to unquestioning and delighted submission to His authority, but to an active, cheerful, and inquiring fulfilment of His commands. All His preciousness and excellence, as an everlasting and all-powerful Saviour, will appear to view; and every perception of His worth will be connected with the consciousness of a personal possession of this amazing treasure; so that the heart can exclaim, without fear or doubt, "My beloved is mine and I am His; He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." It is the joy of entire conformity to the Holy Spirit. His sacred and purifying influence completely fills the soul, governing and exalting all its desires and powers; and enabling it, in every moment and every act, perfectly to obey, and richly to enjoy, a glorious justifying God, from whose fulness of love and goodness, boundless blessings are unceasingly flowing out. It is the joy of unbroken harmony and mutual confidence with all the other vessels of His grace, the vast multitudes of His elect and redeemed people; a harmony which is interrupted by no suspicion, disturbed by no fears, marred by no envy, but is continually excited, encouraged, and rewarded by every possible expression of kindness, and by unceasing acts of love. It is a blessedness which no opposing thought ever arises to

embitter; while the soul in a clear perception of its unsurpassed excellence and worth, cannot but utter forth the inspired testimony, "Behold! how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It is the joy of active and abounding love to a soul which is taught to find all its happiness in the exercise of this heavenly affection; love to God, supreme and perfect, expressing itself in grateful adoration, obedience, and praise; love to all whom God loves, because they wear His image, and for His sake; love, the light of which from within, throws a pure brilliancy upon every thing without; and the overflowing of which from the fountain of the soul, adds sweetness to every engagement and every duty of a heavenly state. It is a joy so adapted to the soul's condition, and so combined of every element which an all-gracious God can gather to fill up the measure of its bliss, that there is no possible deficiency or failure. The exalted Saviour there sets himself to bless His people. They are partakers of His glory, and His delights are with them. The joy which they receive, has no contingency or condition founded upon their limited excellence connected with it. He bestows it freely, as the merited result of His own obedience for them. The foundation upon which it rests is eternal, and eternally secure. How great is the rejoicing arising from this fact! With unspeakable delight and transport, they receive the gift from Him; and as they drink of the pleasures which are at His right hand, they ascribe all the glory of their exalted condition to His unsearchable grace. "Worthy is the Lamb that was

slain to receive honour, and glory, and blessing," is the song of their grateful hearts. And in His presence, and in an enjoyment of His glory, they come short in no gift which He has power to bestow, to perfect their nature, or to enlarge and confirm their bliss.

While the past and the present are thus filled with sources of joy and glory for the saint with Christ, the *future* must be forever the crowning glory of the whole. This exalted state is an everlasting state;—no possibility of failure or decay remains within it. All its glories are bestowed and covenanted by a redeeming God for an eternity. No fears of change, no suspense in expectation, no anxiety in anticipating approaching periods, can ever have place in the glorified soul. All is settled, and upheld, and governed by an Omnipotent God, whose great power is now to be forever exercised in the rewarding and comforting His people. With perfect tranquillity, and with assured confidence, may they repose themselves upon Him, and take the cup of salvation, and call upon His holy name. What power and worth does this single word add to their condition of glory—**ETERNITY!** A secure, settled, unspeakably happy eternity! The soul may embark upon it without a single doubt or hazard, and yield itself to a free and full enjoyment of its blessedness and glory. It is an ocean without a shore, but without a storm. It is a kingdom which cannot be removed,—the kingdom of God, in which He rules, and gives, and blesses, and exalts His glorified people for succeeding ages; and in which the great employment of the exalted Head, and

His immortal subjects, is to promote, and extend, and perpetuate, to the utmost possible degree, the universal happiness of the vast and unfading dominion, in which as Immanuel, He reigns. Wonderful beyond our expression is this elevated and abiding state! Before the foundation of the world, God prepared it for His saints. During the time-state and history of His church, He was fitting them to enjoy it, and reserving it in heaven for them. Now in an eternity of glory He is delighted in bestowing it upon them, enabling them to possess it, securing their enjoyment of it, and receiving their grateful and rejoicing praises for the everlasting stability and fulness of His love.

With such prospects and hopes are the servants of Christ comforted and upheld in their present earthly course. They willingly here count all things but loss for Christ, and receive Him in exchange if need be, for every earthly relation, or gain. He is their portion and their treasure; and they are rich and full in possessing Him. Christ is all, in their present hope, and their future enjoyments. As they are rejected and reproached by men, and mingle their drink with weeping, and their bread with ashes, they have still within them, this divine upholding Saviour, and before them, this glorious heavenly home. O that they might all taste the full benefit of such provisions of grace and love; and press forward with increasing earnestness, to lay hold of the prize before them! Why should they be conformed to earth? Why should they cultivate a desire for its gifts, or yield to the influence of its snares, or think of its portions as if they were of value and impor-

tance? With such privileges and hopes, what manner of persons ought they to be, in all holy conversation and godliness! People of Christ! ye are bought with a price. Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost. Ye are the messengers and glory of Christ. Ye are members of the family of God. Ye are inhabitants of the heavenly city, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. O live and walk as such, amidst the cares and follies of earth! Strive, not to make heaven compatible with earth, but earth subservient to heaven. So that in every day and every engagement of life, whether apparently important or trifling, you may be gaining for eternity, and laying a faster hold upon the life to come. Thus may you look forward with increasing confidence, that to depart, will be "to be with Christ, which is far better."

CHAPTER XVII.

HEAVENLY WORSHIP.

THE Apostle teaches us, that in the ancient worship of the tabernacle and temple, the priest who “ offered gifts according to the law, served unto the *example* and *shadow* of heavenly things,” or as an illustration and type of heavenly things. The ritual of worship which was divinely appointed for them, was of an instructive and prefigurative character. To the spiritual mind, it was a guide to higher and heavenly facts. It led the thoughts of faith, forward, to a *sacrifice* that should afterwards be offered, as a true propitiation for the sins of men;—to a *priesthood* which should be established as a real mediation between God and men;—and to the *actual holy of holies*, the place of the dwelling of the Most High, into which this Priest should enter as a forerunner, and living advocate for His people, after he had once for all, offered himself to put away their sins. There was thus an unceasing preaching and testimony of heavenly things within this divinely prescribed ritual of earthly worship. And though the spirit of negligence,—and the love of novelty,—and the indifference of unbelief, might be ready to say, “ what a

weariness is it ;”—and though without this constant realized connection between *present* and *future*,—*earthly* and *heavenly* things ; it would have been a yoke upon all, which none would have been able to bear ; yet faith in the word of God kept constant hold of this promise of future things ; and the true believers in God in all the twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, rejoiced in the hope, of coming at last, to this promise made of God unto their fathers. The delight which they had in the worship in which they were unceasingly engaged, was that they were not only having present communion and fellowship with God, but were serving Him also after the example and shadow of heavenly things ;—and their taste for these was enhanced, and their desires after them were quickened, as they were led forward in the circle of their year, offering oftentimes, the same sacrifices of homage, worship, and praise.

In the gráacious providence of God, we are living upon earth, in a dispensation, in which the examples and shadows of the earlier ritual have been filled up, and completed, so far as this present life is concerned. The plans of God have travelled forward, until the true offering has been made for sin, and bleeding sacrifices on earth have therefore ceased ; and the real priesthood has been revealed, and therefore typical earthly priesthoods have passed away ;—and the actual Leader has entered into the holiest for His people, —and therefore all illustrating symbols of this great work have become unnecessary. But neither for the church, nor for individual believers,

are we yet in a final state. All who are now *in* Christ, are expecting the hour when in the full enjoyment of His glory, they shall be *with* Him forever. We have still to look forward to real heavenly things, as the experience of the church of God ; and to an eternal participation in them, as the portion of each individual believer in the Son of God. And as faith receives the divine promise, and contemplates its certain realization in the appointed time, the tribes of God in every nation, and in every land, are still instantly serving God day and night, in the blessed hope of coming to this glorious end. The worship in which they engage on earth, to be acceptable and useful, should be adapted to sustain this faith, and confirm this hope ; and be both for an introduction to their enjoyment, and for an instruction into their nature, as nearly as possible conformed to the example and pattern of heavenly things.

The divine Apostle brings forth to our view, the worship of the heavenly sanctuary, and of the glorified ones with Christ, when he says, “ They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.” Whatever earthly facts may be portrayed in the succeeding symbols of that sacred book from which this passage comes, which to the mind of the Apostle, were conveyed in its glowing and wonderful figures ; there can be no doubt that many portions of its early chapters are intended to describe the actual view of heavenly things, which the unveiling of this invisible world displayed to him. He beheld a door opened in

heaven ;—he heard the voice of a celestial trumpet, inviting him to ascend in spirit and see the wonders which should be revealed ;—he saw the mysterious throne of the Deity shining before him ;—the unspeakable glory of the Father, like a jasper and a sardine stone, seated upon the throne ;—the personal exhibition of the Son, as a Lamb that had been slain, in the midst of the throne ;—the peculiar emblem of the Holy Spirit, like lamps of fire burning around the throne ;—the mysterious living ones, called by us the cherubim and seraphim ;—the congregated elders of the redeemed church, who could testify to the work which had been finished for them ; and hosts of attending angels vainly counted, crowding in the far distance, like thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, filled up the courts of the Lord, and made up the congregation of this heavenly sanctuary. Here was the true tabernacle ;—the priest, the sacrifice, the altar, the Deity, were all there ; not in shadow, but in fact. He saw this amazing congregation in the worship of their unchanging sabbath. He listened to their praise,—he drank in the harmony of their triumphs,—he heard the sweet melody of their new song, and the deep, prolonged, swelling chorus of their glorious responses. He seemed to himself to be with them long, for he tells of the repetition of their praises through succeeding days and nights. He receives the command, “ Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.” And he writes for the guidance, consolation, and encour-

agement of the members of Christ on earth, the glories which he saw; and especially, and in many descriptions, the *worship* which he beheld,—*the worship of heaven*,—the worship of those who are with Christ forever.

In its outward shape and mode, this heavenly worship was worship in a prescribed, unchanging *form*. The redeemed ones rested not, day and night, in the offering of their form of praise. And although individual being in heaven, as upon earth, must have individual and peculiar memories of blessings received, and secret consciousness of obligations, and private special reasons for thanksgiving and love;—and it is impossible to suppose that these are not indulged, and uttered in personal, private communion with God, in the individual enjoyment of His presence and glory;—yet, when the united offering of their worship is made, individual peculiarity yields to a common experience, and a common condition; and the heavenly worship is unceasing worship in a known, and a divinely prescribed form. This form in various parts of the divine liturgy, the Apostle describes:—he repeats, and writes, the very words, he heard the choirs of the blest ones utter, as they were engaged in it. He listened to them, as they sang over and over again, the glorious chant, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come;” as they repeated the triumphant song in memory of creation, “Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created;” as they uttered together

the thankful tribute to the Lamb for His redeeming love, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us kings and priests unto our God."—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

These are parts of the heavenly form of praise and prayer. What millions of Christ's suffering ones have been taught it, and have united in it, since the Apostle beheld its amazing glory! What millions (some, perhaps, individually most dear to us) are this hour engaged in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary, according to this divine liturgy! And may we not ask, is that which is the appointed vehicle of heavenly worship, likely to be unsuitable, or deadening in its influence, or unspiritual in its character, upon the earth? Shall the religious experience and emotions of redeemed souls in heaven rejoice to express themselves in forms of prayer, and shall prescribed forms be considered necessary destruction to the spirit of religion among redeemed souls below? Nay,—blessed is the privilege of the permanence of the words prescribed for united worship, so that they are words of excellence and truth, and adapted to edify the believing soul. O that we might catch in our earthly liturgies, something of the spirit that glows in that which is uttered by immortal tongues!

St. Paul describes two earthly churches, by strangely different characteristics. To the one, *1 Cor.* xiv. 26, he says, "How is it then, brethren?

when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm,—hath a doctrine,—hath a tongue,—hath a revelation,—hath an interpretation. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace ;—as in all the churches of the saints.”—“ Let all things be done decently, and in order.” To the other, *Colos.* ii. 5, he says, “ Though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Now let the characteristics of these two churches be transferred to the heavenly sanctuary :—O, how sad would be the fall in the description, had St. John written of the church above,—I heard, and “ every one had a psalm, had a doctrine, had a tongue, had a revelation !” Alas ! it is no longer the deep, clear, unbroken harmony of heaven ;—but discord and confusion, which have no authorship in God, transported thither. And which of the two churches was the more evidently becoming ready for the heavenly worship ;—discordant, confused, unsettled Corinth,—or orderly, steadfast, uniform Colosse ? Can we think, then, that a form of prayer and praise prescribed in the public worship of the church below, is a necessary hindrance to devotion, and to the work of the Spirit, in a preparation for the church above ; when, in their heavenly worship, they rest not day and night, in the utterance of the same blessed form of words ? And if heavenly worship be not mere formal worship,—though it be worship in a prescribed form,—is it indispensable that a form of prayer in earthly worship, shall be always and only, the religion of form ?

Again, the heavenly worship, as described by St. John, was a *responsive* worship. The evidences of this are very striking and peculiar. The parts of the liturgy which he records, seem founded upon a comprehensive and perfect system, which includes many important particulars:—First, the four living ones, the cherubim, utter their general ascription of praise and honour, as in our text, to God in Trinity:—"They rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Then, when they have uttered forth this glorious awakening tribute, giving glory, and honour, and thanks to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth forever and ever,—the elders, the representatives of the redeemed church, fall down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, and utter together their glorious response, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created."

So again,—when the mysteries of redemption are opened and commemorated,—the redeemed of the Lord, fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God, kings, and priests." And when this offer-

ing of praise for complete redemption has been made, by those who have received the blessing, then the response is uttered by the voice of many angels round about the throne, saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And then comes forth, with sublime and unutterable power, the chorus of united harmony, from every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and all that are in them, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." And the living ones around the throne close this offering of heavenly homage, with their final response,—AMEN; and the redeemed elders again fall down and worship Him that liveth forever and ever. Here is a succession of responses; each portion of the glorified congregation taking up their part, in the worship in which all are engaged, and offering their own peculiarly prescribed tribute of praise, with delight and order.

The same fact is recorded in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, where, when the vision of the glorious throne and sanctuary of the Lord of hosts was given to the Prophet, he heard the seraphim which stood around the throne, and veiling their faces with reverence before the King of kings, crying one to another,—or singing in alternate response,—“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts,—the whole earth is full of His glory.”

It was doubtless from a divine instruction in these examples and shadows of heavenly things,

that responsive worship made up the liturgy of the Jewish church. When Moses and the Israelites sang together upon their safe passage through the sea, that beautiful ode recorded in the fifteenth chapter of Exodus, they commenced and repeated their testimony of praise,—“I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.” And Miriam the prophetess took a timbrel in her hands, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dances. And Miriam answered them, “Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;—the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”

The worship of Israel was always upon this pattern of heavenly worship;—one portion responding to another, in their successive ascriptions of praise to God; and in the Christian church, the very same divine system has prevailed from the beginning. Responsive liturgies were the early and permanent method of public worship among the churches, in the primitive ages of the Christian dispensation; and who can think it an improvement, which in modern days, has so much robbed the people of their union in praise, and prayer, and given both the one and the other, wholly to different appointed individual agents, in the public worship of the sanctuary. The worship of God is the united act of the assembled people. And I esteem the possession of a pure and evangelical form of public prayer, a very great privilege and happiness for any church. That precious form of worship which God has mercifully granted to us in the Episcopal Church,

is distinguished by its imitation of heavenly homage. Its harmonious responses of thankfulness and humiliation, while in their construction they partake of this excellency of heavenly worship,—allowing none to be deprived of their union in the blessed and happy work,—partake also in their character, of the very spirit of the heavenly sanctuary. And the mind is not to be desired, that is not animated and enlivened in worship, and does not find in itself accordance and delight, as we unite together in the heavenly strains of our *Te Deum*, or the penitential supplications of our beautiful Litany. Can it be a renewed and Christian heart, that finds not food adapted to its taste, or language expressive of its feelings, in these responsive offerings of prayer and praise? Can one be ready to enter upon his portion of the higher and purer worship above, who has scornfully rejected,—despised,—perhaps scoffed at,—the expressive responses, in which we are here engaged below?

Again, the worship of heaven is a *repeated* worship. It is not only a responsive form, but it is a form continually repeated. “They rest not day and night,” saying again and again, the very same words of thanksgiving and adoration. There is no other gratification to the desire of change, or provision for the passion for novelty there, than that which is found in the acquisition of deeper, clearer, and happier views of the love, and worthiness of their glorious object of praise. Their joys, pleasures, and employments, manifestly all run in the same line, and towards the same point. To suppose weariness in this

unity, is to impute either defect to the object, or deficiency of affection to the worshippers. But there are new glories continually seen in Him ; and new delights, and new flames of love, continually arising in them. And though day by day, they gather with the same offering ; and unite again in the same song ; and testify to the glorious excellency of their God in the very same words of praise ;—the song is always new, the employment always a privilege ; and the Being whom they serve, is always, all their salvation, and all their desire. But is the continually repeated worship of heaven, “battology,”—“vain repetitions ?” Would it be improved, if new additions or varieties were every day brought in ? Do saints become wearied of saying, “Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty :”—“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ?” And is that which is no evil in heaven, but made a part even of the bliss and blessedness of heaven, an evil,—yea, an evil destructive of all good, when it is imitated and maintained on earth ? Would redeemed ones there reject with displeasure, an objection to their repetitions, or an offering of improvement by something new in their worship ? And do we become spiritually dead, and show ourselves so, because we repeat over and over again, with new satisfaction, the blessed prayer which our Lord hath taught us, or sing the time-honoured ascription, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end ?” Alas, then, how different is the estimate of facts, by minds in heaven and minds on

earth ! Nay, we do not find it so. Years pass by us ; but our wants remain, and our obligations are undiminished. And the words with which we yesterday went to Jesus, we find just as appropriate to day ; for He is the same, and the same to us, “ yesterday, to-day, and forever.” The sorrows which we felt last year under the burden of sin, are repeated and renewed in this ; and we can find no other, or better expressions, to utter feelings which are thus wholly unchanged, than those which have proclaimed the feelings of our hearts before. The liturgy which guided our youth, attends with appropriateness as complete upon our old age. The confessions, the thanksgivings, the prayers, the praises, which we heard when we were first brought to the sanctuary, we just as sincerely love to unite in, when we are gathering near the tomb. Many things have changed with us and around us ; but our needs, and our relations to God, and our dependance upon Him have never changed ;—we are the same sinners still, and He is still the same glorious and benignant Benefactor. And we are ready to say with good old George Herbert, even in the hour of death, “ Give me the prayers of my good mother,—the Church of England ;—there are none better than those.” And if it be a weariness to us here voluntarily allowed and indulged, to watch one hour with angels and archangels in their songs of worship ; O, how are we becoming ready to rest not day and night, in the worship of the heavenly sanctuary, saying, “ Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come !”

But though the heavenly worship is in a repeated responsive form, it is a purely *spiritual and elevated* worship. The principles upon which it is founded, are those great and precious truths which give the Gospel all its glory, and make it the glad tidings of salvation to suffering, fallen man. The worship of the saints unceasingly acknowledges the Glorious Trinity of persons in the Godhead. "Holy, holy, holy Lord God of hosts," is the great type of this foundation-truth, and the token and index of their habitual praise. The gracious offices of these Divine Persons in their behalf, the saints joyfully remember. The works which they have severally done, in restoring guilty man to God, and in bringing many sons to eternal glory, they proclaim and adore. For all their works of mercy, these Divine Persons are severally personally praised. But the divine unity of their nature, is with equal delight honoured and confessed. As in the striking expression of the Book of Common Prayer, the saints with Christ have received "grace to acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty, to worship the unity," of that Great and Glorious Being who is from everlasting to everlasting, the only wise God. With the deepest reverence of mind and spirit, they contemplate and adore this amazing manifestation of Jehovah. With unfeigned and exalted gratitude they commemorate the practical exhibition of His redeeming power, which they have themselves received. Perfect faith in the truth of His revelation casts out all doubts, and answers all questions; while deep humility feels and confesses

still, the weakness and ignorance of the creature, however exalted, in any attempt, by searching to find out God, or to understand the Almighty to perfection. The worship of the saints continually exalts the Lamb who was crucified for sin, and hath washed them in His own blood. He is in the midst of the throne, as the object of their praise. He dwelleth among them, as the great source of their spiritual nourishment and support. Their comforts and joys are derived from His presence. Their glory and honour depend upon His power and love. They are adorned with His excellence; they shine in the majesty of His triumphs; and they delight to cast their crowns at His feet. Almost above all other relations and aspects, in which we can consider this great truth, may it be said, that in the worship of heaven,—Christ is all. There the deepest personal humiliation, under the burden of conscious sin,—sin remembered by themselves, though forgiven by God,—and the feeling of their own insignificance in the presence of the Majesty on High; take away every vain thought of pride or boasting, and bring down all the saints in the lowest prostration of spirit and aspect before the throne of God. Nothing of all the amazing mercies which they have so abundantly received, is attributed to any power or excellence of their own. Perfect self-renunciation is the uniform spirit and habit of the saints with Christ, and speaks in all the offerings of their heavenly worship. There God hath all the glory, for every grace. The Father, approached through the Son, by the Spirit, receives the unmingled honour for the glorious

plan and the triumphant accomplishment of redeeming mercy. The whole work of grace is received as a free gift; as much a gift in the crown of glory in which it results, as in the purpose of election in which it began. Unceasing glory is thus given to Him who has done exceeding abundantly above all they could ask or think, in the heavenly church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages. In all these facts, the spiritual worship of heaven is displayed. And the continually repeated form of the heavenly liturgy, is the offering of their eternal praise, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

Allow me to remind you, how eminent, and how eminently beautiful, holy and impressive, in all these spiritual characteristics of heavenly worship, is our own earthly liturgy. There is but one sun shining upon its pages, and that is everywhere presenting the noonday of truth. It is the glorious name, and character, and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. While the praying soul is taught to feel and to confess itself, deeply humbled under the burden of its guilt, Jesus has all the honour and glory of His interposing grace, forgiving and upholding it. Is it then unreasonable, that we should cling to this precious book in our earthly worship, as our heritage and guide? or feel thankful for the privilege of being led by such a provision of wisdom in our present offerings of prayer? We may indeed exalt the Prayer Book too highly, in a mere barren eulogy. But we can hardly elevate it beyond its worth, in a spiritual and practical use of it, as an aid and in-

strument for the united worship of the members of Christ on earth. The frame of mind which it implies and requires, is that in which a happy eternity may be passed. And the more this frame becomes deeply and permanently the possession of those who are in Christ on earth, are they becoming ready in heart and mind, for the worship of that higher congregation with Christ, in which they are invited eternally to join. O let us seek to make it, and to find it, our beloved companion in a heavenly road to a heavenly home! The heart which is conformed to its teachings, is certainly conformed to the will of God. And they who thus worship God in the earthly sanctuary, in the spirit and mind which are here inculcated and required, are certainly worshipping Him after the pattern of heavenly things; and may rejoice in the blessed hope of uniting with certainty and with pleasure, in that heavenly host who rest not day and night, saying, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD GOD ALMIGHTY, WHICH WAS, AND IS, AND IS TO COME."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SAVIOUR'S GLORY.

“ON His head were many crowns,” says the divine Apostle, in describing the appearance of the triumphant Saviour. Of these crowns of Jesus, I would try to speak. The footstool of the Lord Jesus Christ, is the attractive centre for all holy minds. Angels who have never sinned, delight to worship Him,—to be His servants,—ministering spirits, fulfilling all His will. On earth, they proclaimed His advent and incarnation, with songs of rapture. They ministered to His infirmities in the flesh; and consoled, and honoured Him in the sorrows which He endured, as the substitute for man. They rolled the stone from the door of His sepulchre, and adorned and proclaimed the glory of His resurrection. They attended His ascension in triumph, and announced as He departed, His future reappearance, for the vindication of His saints,—the establishment of His kingdom,—and the judgment of the world. In heaven they encircle the multitude of His redeemed, and bow together with them, in grateful homage around His throne. Numbering ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, they unite in their song, and their ascription

of unlimited honour and praise to Him. They take up their responsive part, in that glorious tribute of the saints, "Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Redeemed beings who have been rescued from the condemnation and the power of sin, owe all that they have to Him. It is their peculiar characteristic, that they call upon the name of Jesus Christ the Lord, and honour Him with all the honour which limited minds can give, because they find Him precious to their hearts. To every such mind, He is the Sun of Righteousness,—the source of light,—the fountain of all protection, life, and peace. Are they on earth?—They have been ransomed and renewed by His power. He is the foundation of their hope;—all fulness of desirable treasure dwells in Him;—and He is to them, the single practical source, of every thing which is important, and precious in their esteem. They feel it impossible, to exalt Him too highly, or to employ terms of ascription to Him, which shall exceed His rightful claim upon them. To them, He is all, in all. Are they in heaven?—They possess, and exhibit in a still higher degree, the spirit which concentrates all honour and praise upon the name, and character, and work of Jesus. Their highest enjoyment is to follow Him. Their loftiest occupation is to serve Him. Their most elevated recompense is the permission to praise Him in the courts of His holiness, and to cast their tributary glories, in humble acknowledgment, before His feet.

This is the pervading spirit of the whole family of God. It is the spirit which unites earth to heaven, and which constitutes upon earth, the only preparation for heaven. It combines angels and redeemed sinners, in unerring harmony of praise; and wakes up a chorus, which knows no discordance, nor lassitude, nor end, as it gives utterance to the universal desire, to honour the Son of God with all honours, and to acknowledge His title to all blessing and praise. In this spirit would I close our present subject, with a consideration of the Saviour's glory and triumph, as they are proclaimed in the Apostle's beautiful form of illustration, "On His head were many crowns."

The crown has been in all ages and nations of men, the symbol of elevation and triumph. It is also the mark of acknowledged and respected dominion. Several crowns the conceded right of a single person, are the representations of varied and successive triumphs, or the pledges of authority, over different communities combined. As the symbol of triumph and dominion, "many crowns" describe the varied honours and rights of the Son of God. He is exalted above all principalities and powers in heavenly places; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto Him. He leads forth His redeemed to final triumph, His work for them completed, and himself bearing the emblematic sign of the honours which it has conferred upon Him.

He wears the crown of primitive creation. By Him were all things made, which are in

heaven or in earth, visible or invisible; and without Him was there not so much as one thing made, which was made. We are divinely taught to take the history of the creation, as the first manifestation of the power and work of the Son of God. And as light shines out of darkness, and day is divided from night;—and the waters gather into the seas, and the appearing land brings forth its fruit;—and planets and suns illuminate the heavens above, and living beings spring from the earth beneath;—and man walks forth under the divine hand, in the image of his Maker;—we are directed by the Holy Spirit, to bring all our offerings of praise, to the feet of the only begotten Son, and to say, “How manifold are thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast thou made them all.”—“The heavens declare thy glory, the firmament showeth thy handy work,—the earth is full of thy riches.” All these are the works of His hands. The wisdom, power, and goodness which they display, combine to adorn His name, and to manifest the attributes of His person. They shine as radiant jewels, in the crown, which, as Creator of all, Jesus wears forever. And the heavenly host acknowledge His right, while they sing, “Worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.”

He wears the crown of universal Providence and government. “By Him all things consist:”—“He upholdeth all things by the word of His power.” To Him is the divine ascription addressed, “Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou

hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens with all their host,—the earth, and all things that are therein,—the seas, and all that is therein,—and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee.” This amazing work of providence and support, is indeed, but a prolonged creation. Its wonders, who can comprehend? It calls into being, every successive generation of existence, and it provides for them all. What human arithmetic can count the numbers of this single globe,—running in their scale, from the little insect that defies the piercings of the microscope, to the hugest monster of the deep? And yet all these, in their orders and varieties, endlessly combining, and endlessly differing, are sustained, preserved, provided for, by Him who upholdeth them all, from generation to generation, and by whom they all consist. But even these wonders yield to the greater events of the history of man. Here, there is not only provision for animal wants, but a controlling, and overruling, of intellectual powers, and moral determinations. And yet, in all these voluntary acts of beings of calculation and motive, the Divine Ruler perfectly accomplishes His own determinate counsel and will; and weaves, with every varied thread, a robe of glory for himself, and a curtain of happiness for man. Ages succeed each other, but as the several chapters of His gracious Providence. Many generations, all independent and distinct in their apparent action, unwittingly combine, to bring His single purpose to pass. And yet, this single globe is but an unit in the system which His hand sustains. Of the history of others, we

know nothing. But we may certainly with reason suppose, that their whole destiny is not fulfilled, in giving light by day and night to us. But whether to us, they be worlds visible or invisible, He is Lord of all. All live through Him; and the glory of preserving them all, and of making them all to promote His own high, and wise, and perfect ends, is one of the crowns of that Divine Redeemer, who is God over all, blessed forever.

· He wears the crown of a perfect and accepted sacrifice for sin, accomplished by Him. This is the beginning of another work,—His great and marvellous work,—to which the whole dignity of His Deity was applied, and for which all the wonderful excellencies of His humanity were acquired. In this incarnate state, He gave himself a sacrifice for sin,—a ransom for many,—a propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He became a curse for us. He bare our sins in His body on the tree. The death of the guilty was laid upon Him, and in Him was life for the believing. His course of sorrow was closed in a voluntary death, as the substitute and sacrifice for sinners. He filled their place,—assumed their obligations,—endured their punishment,—and paid in His own sufferings, what their guilt deserved. This wonderful sacrifice was accepted by the Father for them. Its acceptance was announced in the divine assurances conveyed to man by the Holy Spirit, before the Saviour came into the world, to make the offering of himself. It was proclaimed by the repeated celestial voices, during His lowly incarnation, which de-

clared the Father's good pleasure to be fulfilled in Him. It was sealed by the Spirit of power and holiness in His revivifying and raising from the dead, the body which had been crucified for sin. It is continually reiterated, as He lives to be the prevailing, abiding representative, before the Majesty on High, of those for whom he died,—to bestow upon them the finished and perfect salvation, which He hath consequently attained. This accepted sacrifice for sin, is a wonderful and glorious work. No other being in the universe could have accomplished it. And its crown of peculiar glory, Jesus wears, while a ransomed church cry out before Him, "Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests."

He wears the crown of an honourable reconciliation between God and man;—honourable I mean, to the character of God;—for the reconciliation of a condemned creature to an offended Creator, giving him pardon upon any terms, is honourable to him, and an unspeakable privilege and blessing. But to enable God, so to exercise His disposition to forgive, that the foundations of His authority shall not be unsettled, nor the fidelity of His government stained, was a great and difficult work. And this is that which Jesus has effected. His solution of the difficulty has showed how God can be just, and yet the justifier of guilty man. He has magnified the law, and made it honourable, even while He rescues man from its dominion, and forbids the exercise of its power upon him. He is set forth,—as the di-

vine,—and the divinely appointed, representative of God's reconciliation to man. God loving the world, desiring and determining its restoration, has given in Him the wonderful revelation of this fact, and provided in Him the all-sufficient means for its accomplishment. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;"—but bearing them as a voluntary burden upon himself. Here is a reconciliation which is perfectly honourable to God. No attribute of His character suffers,—no aspect of His nature or government has been clouded,—no purpose or determination of His holiness and truth has been compromised or given up. But here is the brightness of His glory,—here are the treasures of His wisdom and knowledge,—here are the previous hidings of His power,—here are the highest and purest emanations of His excellence, even in the view of the creatures who know Him best. Angels desire to look into the glories which shine forth in the face of Jesus Christ. The Son is glorified, and the Father is glorified in Him. The riches of divine grace and glory are displayed in the abolishing of enmity, and the bringing those who were far off, nigh by the blood of Christ. For this manifestation of His power, the whole family which is named by Him in heaven, and on earth, unite together to give Him praise, and the crown of this glorious work, He wears forever.

He wears the crown of final victory over the power of death for man. Death reigned as the penalty of sin,—and reigned over all, because all had sinned. Its dominion brought the body of

man down, through pain, and suffering, and decay, to entire dissolution. Its power over the soul was like its subject, undying, and threw it into the condition of perpetual sorrow in banishment from God,—with no prospect of rest, or possibility of decay. This reigning power Jesus met and conquered. His plan of grace restores all the ruins of the fall. He plucks the body from the grave,—by sanctifying, and rendering promotive of ultimate happiness, every sorrow which leads to it ; and by guarding and protecting it in the tomb, with an assurance of future resurrection. He rescues the soul from death, by bringing it back in peace to God ;—by opening before it a glorious immortality,—and by making it a partaker of life unfading in the heavens, through the gift of all the work and merits of His personal mediation, to its secure possession and enjoyment. This is the victory of Jesus. It is a complete and eternal victory. Being raised from the dead, He dieth no more,—death hath no more dominion over Him. Because He liveth, all who believe in Him, shall live also. All things for them, are put under his feet. He giveth them the victory,—and every ransomed soul in glory, and all the shining multitude who shall stand in the general resurrection clothed in bodies spiritual and incorruptible, will give all the praise to Him, who through death, has abolished death, and made them to sit on His throne as more than conquerors in Him. In Him they triumph, and with Him they reign ;—and he wears forever, the crown of the victory which He hath given them.

He wears the crown of personal redemption for

each soul that receives life through Him. The whole work of mediation He has accomplished for a world destroyed. The individual application of this work, He makes to each,—as He applies by the power of His Holy Spirit, pardon for sins past, and righteousness for complete justification;—and impresses anew His own image upon the pardoned and justified soul;—dwelling within it, as a hope of glory, and enabling it in assured faith, to confide, and to rejoice in Him. This is a successive and repeated work of divine mercy, accomplished in every single case of spiritual conversion, and finished in each case by His power. Thus by the Holy Ghost, He restores the lost, rescues the condemned, confirms the weak, and brings His chosen sons to the enjoyment of His glory. In the finishing of this work, how many obstacles interpose,—how many difficulties must be overcome,—how much long suffering must be exercised;—how patiently must He wait, and labour, and strive with each, in the long pilgrimage, through which they sometimes pass to their final rest! New enemies are to be overcome,—new wants are to be supplied,—new sorrows are to be consoled,—new weaknesses are to be filled up,—new sins are to be pardoned, every day:—and His single power accomplishes the whole. Who is he that overcometh, but he that believeth on the only begotten Son of God? And when this victory is finished, and brought forth for each,—to whom but unto Him, will all the glory be ascribed? Each perfected spirit will take up its part, in the accordant confession of a redeemed race, “*We are they who have come*

out of great tribulation, and have washed our robes, and made them white, in the blood of the Lamb;—therefore are we before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple,—and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among us.” And He will wear the crown of triumph, for the redemption of each, who hath bought them all, a peculiar people for himself. It will be the glory of Christ, thus to be crowned with his church. He has a throne, a sceptre, and a crown, in every particle of dust, and every created atom adds to His glory. But to be crowned with His church, is His greatest glory,—all other is eclipsed by this.

He will wear the crown of his millennial kingdom. To this glorious issue, all prophecy leads us. The Son of man is to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return and reign among his saints. The whole earth shall be possessed and filled with his glory, and the knowledge of his grace, like an overwhelming sea. The blindness and the wanderings of Israel shall be finished, in their acknowledgment of his truth, and their peaceful possession of their fathers’ land. The fulness of the Gentiles shall flow in upon the triumphant church,—all people shall walk in the light of the Lord,

One song employ all nations,—
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.

The wickedness of the wicked shall have come to a perpetual end, and God will forever establish the just. The Son of God shall appear in His

glory, and reign over a ransomed world, in the perfection of honour, beauty, and peace. His tabernacle shall be with His people, and the shout of the King of Zion shall be heard among them. In reference to this glorious crown, who would not unite in the poet's prayer :—

“Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one,
The crown of all the earth,—
Thou who alone art worthy !
It was thine by ancient covenant, ere nature's birth,
And thou hast made it thine, by purchase since,
And o'erpaid its value with thy blood.
Thy saints proclaim thee King ;—and in their hearts
Thy title is engraven with a pen
Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.—
Thy saints proclaim thee King ; and thy delay
Gives courage to thy foes, who, could they see
The dawn of thy last advent, long desired,
Would creep into the bowels of the hills,
And flee for safety to the falling rocks.
Come then, and added to thy many crowns,
Receive yet one, as radiant as the rest,
Due to thy last, and most effectual work,
Thy word fulfilled, the conquest of a world.”

Even beyond this triumph, He shall wear the crown of the eternal security of His saints, in the kingdom which they have received. They are established in that final glory by His power,—clothed in the garments of excellency which He hath provided,—and fed and nourished by Him, in the kingdom which He hath prepared for them. All that they have, they have in Him, and from Him forever. To His glory they shine. By His power they are sustained, and their everlasting

triumph is an unceasing manifestation of His grace in upholding and blessing them. In acknowledgment of this fact, they cast their crowns before the throne on which He rules, and adore the Lamb, as their light, and their glory forever. Their state is forever one of divine grace, not of creature merit. Their everlasting recompense is the free gift of Him, who purchased it for them, by His sufferings in the flesh, and of whose righteousness it is the crown. The honour of all belongs to Him forever. He is glorified in His saints, and admired in all who believe. He shows to principalities and powers in heavenly places, the manifold riches of His wisdom and grace, as they are displayed in this ransomed church, which He hath chosen, purchased, and sanctified for himself.

These are some of the "many crowns" which are worn by the Son of God. They exhibit the glory which belongs to Him, and the honour which He justly claims from all.

To those of you who are one with Christ, how deeply interesting is a consideration of His heavenly triumph! O, while your names are written in His book, and your hearts are partaking of His love, learn to bless Him as the single source of all your inheritance of peace and glory! Consider with deep humiliation, what you were, when you were called by His grace. Remember with new thankfulness, through what trials He has carried you. Try to estimate,—you can never do it perfectly,—how important He is to your welfare,—how unspeakably precious He ought to be to your hearts!

To those of you who are still neglecting Him, how important is a recollection of His power and greatness. Who else, in heaven or in earth, can be a Saviour to you? Is all His mercy nothing to you? Look at the free and gracious offers, which He makes to you. Look at the alternative of ruin, to which their rejection exposes you. See the glory to which you are invited. See the limited time, in which your participation in it, is to be secured and proved. Cast not away from you, this blessed hope offered in Him, which hath great recompense of reward.

CHAPTER XIX.

PREPARATION.

No consideration connected with this everlasting state, can be unimportant. But among all others, perhaps no one is of more consequence, than a view of a proper preparation for its enjoyment. There is a distinct meetness for the inheritance of the saints with Christ, to be acquired by man upon the earth. And having considered some attributes of this inheritance in itself, we may now well bestow a few thoughts upon this interesting point.

We are always to distinguish accurately between a title to this heavenly inheritance, and an ability to enjoy it;—between the right to be partakers of it, and the meetness to become so. This is a perfectly familiar distinction. The right to enter within the limits of a foreign land is in the regular permission of its authorities, identified by the customary passport. An ability or meetness to enjoy this right,—to make this permission available and useful to him who holds it, depends among other things, upon his familiarity with the language, and the similarity of his tastes and habits with the customs and circumstances of the country, to which the right admits him. If he

be wholly destitute of the latter, the former will be but an empty and valueless possession to him. And on the other hand, if he be thoroughly qualified in the latter, the want of the former will be a fatal want. Now, though in our relation to the better country, even an heavenly, where the redeemed are with Christ, this separation can never take place;—but God actually gives the meetness, to every one who accepts the offered right to enter into His rest; the ideas are perfectly distinct, and are so to be regarded. Our whole title to this glorious rest, this heavenly inheritance, consists in the perfect obedience and victory of the Son of God in our behalf, who by His death has overcome death, and brought life and immortality to light. We can never plead any thing, as constituting a right to be with Christ, and to behold the face of God in peace, but the perfectly finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ himself,—the glorious, everlasting righteousness which He has accomplished, and which He bestows upon us through His grace, without any regard to our own works or deservings; a righteousness of which we partake by a simple self-renouncing faith in Him. Our meetness for this glorious inheritance consists in our attainment, through the Holy Ghost dwelling within us, of the mind, and tastes, and habits, which will render it suitable to us, and ourselves suitable to it;—in that forming of Christ within us, as the great object of our affections and trust, which will enable us to improve and enjoy the title to dwell with Him which we have received in His merits, and make it practically available for our

personal benefit. We are permitted to come before God in peace, and to dwell in the presence of His glory, because we have a Mediator and Advocate with God, who is Jesus Christ, the Righteous. We are enabled and prepared thus to come before God,—to depart and be with Christ,—because we are created anew and sanctified by one Spirit, and have received the mind which was also in Jesus Christ our Lord. The title would be of no avail were it separated from this ability to enjoy it. The ability to enjoy it, if we can suppose its separate possession, would be equally ineffectual, without the title thus divinely conferred. In our title to the heavenly inheritance, Christ, in His perfect and everlasting righteousness, is all. In our preparation for its enjoyment, Christ, in His renewing and sanctifying power, is also all. In each view, he that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

In our view of the actual meetness which is given to the Christian for this heavenly glory, we may refer in some points, to the characteristics of this glorious state in itself. They must constitute the standard. Meetness for it, is conformity to them. Whatever are the marks which distinguish the holy and triumphant household of God in glory, are also the attributes which must distinguish those who are fulfilling their work upon the earth in anticipation of this state of glory, and in preparation for its enjoyment.

Among these traits of a heavenly character, there is manifested by the saints above, *a perfect devotion to the will of God*. Their delight is to

do His will. This fact is so prominent, that our Lord presents it as the highest possible standard of obedience to God. Nothing more can be asked of Him in this relation, than that His will may be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. The instant obedience of angels to the divine commands, is exhibited in a very striking and interesting manner in many passages of the Holy Scriptures. They are all ministering spirits, waiting upon His word. To them the redeemed of God have become like,—equally obedient, and equally devoted. It was the meat and drink of the Son of God, when He came in His voluntary subjection to the earth, to do the will of His Father in heaven. The law of God was within His heart. The saints in glory are perfectly conformed to His image, and have the same mind which was in Him. They are, therefore, supremely and completely devoted to the will of God. It cannot be conceived that one of them would hesitate in the instant fulfilment of any divine command. God has but to make known to them what His will requires, to have it thoroughly and at once accomplished. They bow around His throne with significant reverence. They rejoice in the government which he exercises, and in the kingdom over which He reigns. This devotion must be considered absolutely perfect. A single rebellious thought has no countenance, even for a moment, in a heavenly mind. God is all, and in all. They are holy as He is holy, and rejoice in the possession of a spotless likeness to His eternally perfect character. This perfect devotion is a manifest characteristic

of the saints with Christ. A meetness for their inheritance must consist in the attainment of this character. But how elevated it is above the spirit of the earth! How opposite it is to the spirit of the unrenewed man! God is not in all His thoughts. His state of mind is mainly distinguished by his rebellion against God, and by the alienation of his affections and will from the service of God. There must, therefore, be a total transformation of this aspect of the character of man, before he can become prepared to be with Christ. This humble and affectionate reverence for divine authority peculiarly marks a holy mind. Every real servant of God obeys His commands, simply upon the ground that they are His commands. The more completely he becomes a servant of God, the more will this principle pervade and control his character and heart. His discharge of earthly duties, his fulfilment of relative obligations, flow out from this grand principle. The will of God leads him to render unto all their dues. Even in the most inferior station in life, he will be found with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men. The rebellion in which his unconverted heart lived with satisfaction, he will now loathe and abhor. The unquestioning submission to the known commands of God, against which his pride so much revolted, is now his most earnest desire and effort. He has learned to ask for no reasons, but simply for evidence of authority. Show him that thus saith the Lord, and you give him sufficient reason for conduct, which men may think exceedingly absurd. In this blessed

gift of a submissive and devoted spirit of obedience, is a meetness for the heavenly inheritance. And the proportion in which the spirit of entire submission to divine authority has been established in the soul, is the proportion of man's preparation to be with Christ. The Christian who is growing in readiness for his exalted state, is maturing in the conscious possession of this principle, devotion to the will, and submission to the authority of God. He finds the service of God to be perfect freedom ; and enjoys more the lowest place in His service,—to be a doorkeeper in His house, than to dwell as the owner in the tents of wickedness.

A second very manifest characteristic of the saints with Christ, is *an entire satisfaction in Him as their eternal portion*. They find in the knowledge and love of Him, in the enjoyment of His presence and the contemplation of His glory, that which meets their whole desires, and completely fulfils all their expectations. They have awaked in His likeness, and they are satisfied with it. His presence with them is exhibited as their peculiar source of joy. He feeds them, He enlightens them, He refreshes them with the living fountains of His grace. They meet with no disappointment in relation to Him ;—He is all they can or do desire. There is peculiar strength and distinctness in the Scriptural representations upon this subject. There is hardly a promise, or a description of the saints' inheritance, in the centre of which the Heavenly Lamb is not found as its chief glory and attraction. Angels worship Him and minister to Him. Redeemed men proclaim

Him to be their whole salvation. His presence makes the fulness of joy, and His right hand confers pleasures for evermore. As the Redeemer who bought them, and washed them from their sins in His own blood;—who has covered them with the garments of righteousness and salvation, and become himself their portion forever; they unite with one accord to declare His perfect adequacy and adaptation for all their wants. This God is their God forever and ever. This perfect satisfaction in Christ as a portion, is a very important characteristic of their state; and a meetness for the recompense which they have received, will require the establishment of this principle in every man who desires that rest. To the unconverted heart there is no beauty or attraction in a Saviour's character. It has not felt His pardoning love. It has not tasted His transforming grace. It knows nothing therefore of His exceeding excellence and fitness for itself. Here then, there must be set up in man who desires to be with Christ,—as the work of the Holy Ghost,—a principle and standard entirely new, and extremely opposite to his native disposition. I do not say merely, that he must become the servant of Christ, to obey His commands; but that he must find this service to be the real joy and delight of his heart; involving no hardships, demanding no renunciations, for which it does not repay him an hundredfold. He must acquire a state of mind, to which the obedience which Jesus requires, and the services in which He permits him to engage, will be the actual joy and delight of his heart; making the privileges of religion his

pleasure; and constituting communion with Christ his exceeding great reward. There certainly can be no real preparation for being with Christ, until this state of mind is by the Holy Spirit in some degree bestowed. And in proportion as it is attained, and constitutes the character of the soul, will there be an increased preparation for the kingdom of God. In every really sanctified mind, this principle is very manifest, and is the controlling principle. There is to such a mind, much and high enjoyment in its relations to the Saviour,—enjoyment which renders the offers of earth, in all their shapes, exceedingly trifling and worthless, generally disgusting. The mire of the street is not more repulsive to the neat and cleanly, than is the sensual madness of a world without God, to the heart that really loves Christ. Such an heart has drank of the living water which the Saviour gives, and it thirsts no more, neither goes elsewhere to draw. Every thing which it can want, or ask, or imagine, as attractive, is found laid up in Christ. The more it knows, the more it loves. The deeper are its examinations, the fuller is the satisfaction which it receives. It is connected with Christ by this principle of unchanging love. His presence makes its light and glory on the earth, and identifies its prospects of light and glory in the heavenly world. And however it often mourns its want of a desired possession and perception of His love, it never experiences any other feeling than entire satisfaction with all that it knows of Him, and intense desire to know Him yet more and more perfectly. This is another very manifest characteristic of increasing meet-

ness for that far better part, which is to be with Christ.

Another characteristic of the saints with Christ, is *their joyful occupation in the service and worship of the Saviour*. There is a continued, persevering consecration of heavenly beings to this one great end. No expression to exhibit this could be stronger, than the single one, "they rest not day and night." It is an employment which brings no toil, and asks for no relaxation. They have been admitted to behold the fair beauty of the Lord, and to inquire and serve in His temple. They delight to do His commandments, and hearken to the voice of His word. This constitutes their joy and crown. And as their devotion to His will is perfect, so their occupation in His service is permanent and persevering. It is true, they are released from the 'clogs and weights of an earthly state ;—from that weakness of the flesh, which encumbers the willingness of the spirit ; and the vast advantage in their condition which this freedom bestows, is to be considered and allowed for. But I refer now to a characterizing principle, which, however it may operate more perfectly amidst higher advantages, cannot fail to operate also as really amidst the lower. The heavenly state is all activity. The very shape under which its exalted inhabitants are exhibited, as clothed with wings, indicates this fact. And this activity is all devoted to a persevering occupation in the service of God. Must not this attribute then, be attained by those who would acquire a meetness to be with Christ ? Can the heart which cannot watch with Jesus

one hour, be prepared to enter upon this eternal occupation ? The Saviour's work intrusted to His people on the earth, is manifest and intelligible. His saints shall bless Him. They shall speak of the glory of His kingdom, and talk of His power ;—that His power, His glory, and the mightiness of His kingdom might be known unto men. The heart which has been led to choose Him, will rejoice to serve Him. All who have Him as a portion, will delight to have Him as a ruler also. The extending of His spiritual dominion upon the earth, involves every duty which can be made incumbent upon His people. There is not an act of obedience to which they are called, which does not in some way exercise an influence upon the work in which He is engaged, and in which they are representatives of him. Their opportunities and means of service and influence may be vastly different, running through a most extensive scale of time and circumstances. But in the principle which governs them, there can be no difference. We cannot conceive of a converted and renewed heart which does not find itself continually led to offer all that it has to Christ, whether it be the mites of penury, or the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of royal possession ;—whether it be the few days of piety which precede an early grave, or the long protracted period of life which brings old age to man. The Christian loves to be occupied for Christ ; and counts it his highest honour, and his dearest pleasure, that he may be permitted to do any thing for Him. If there could be to him an object of envy on earth, it would be the man who has been favoured with a life

of the highest honour to his Redeeming God, and of the largest and longest usefulness to his fellow-men.

These are three very distinct characteristics of a meetness to be with Christ. The man in Christ on earth, who is growing the most mature and ready to be with Christ in heaven, attains and manifests an increasing devotion to the will of God ; an increasing satisfaction with Christ as a portion ; and an increasing desire to be actively and faithfully occupied in the service of the Saviour upon the earth. They are attributes which are easily designated and known. The possession of them is readily identified in the personal consciousness of the man who has them. They involve all the particulars of human duty, and include all the joys of a heavenly state. Where they are found, the accepted child of God is seen maturing for his own glorious and eternal abode. When the Apostle speaks to the Colossians, of this meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, he carries it out into many particulars ;—filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God ; strengthened with all might according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father, who hath thus made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is a meetness to be with Christ, a faithful, practical, persever-

ing obedience of divine commands, and attainment of a divine and heavenly spirit.

This all important character and readiness for the presence of God, is at all times, the gift of His own Holy Spirit, whose office is to produce in the hearts of all who are in Christ on earth, this preparation for their state of glory. He works in them in proportion as they submit to His guidance, and welcome, and rejoice in His power. The whole result of the Christian's sanctification is accomplished by Him,—the fruit of His power. He delivers them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Here He makes the commencement of their religious walk, in the turning of their hearts to God, and renewing and converting them by His grace. There is no other starting point in a religious life, than this real conversion of the heart. They who would attain the subsequent attributes of a holy life, are to be sure of this foundation of it, in a real new birth from God. Thus the Spirit leads them on in a patient continuance in well-doing, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Their walk is in increasing holiness, like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Every act of duty makes the succeeding effort easier and more effectual. There may not be always much apparent gain, but there is real gain for the soul, in every exertion which it puts forth for obedience to the will of God. In this connection no claim is to be despised, and no relative duty is to be esteemed unimportant. The servants of Christ are in every act of life, to press for-

ward in another step towards their eternal inheritance. They are led forward in continual prayer. Thus the spirit of real dependance upon God ever indicates itself. The heart that wants, will ask. The exercise of this praying spirit will be more constant, as they grow in likeness to God, and in preparation for His abode. That which at first appears sometimes rather as a duty, will come to be considered a high and precious privilege. Having gained the Spirit of adoption, they call upon God as their Father, not because they feel it an obligation upon them, but because they have the hearts of children, and love to come to His feet. Being thus in all things, led by the Spirit of God, they are manifested to be the sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. God graciously leads them in succeeding years to His own abode. He loosens successively, the ties which bind them to the earth. The world gradually recedes and disappears. It becomes of less value and influence, and their anticipated separation from it involves fewer difficulties and less discouragement. They are thus preparing in circumstances, as well as in character, for a journey to the better country which is set before them. And as each earthly bond is loosed, they are more ready to part from others also, when it shall be the will of God. A wise and gracious Providence thus unites with a merciful and loving Spirit, in making them ready for that far better part, which is to depart, and be with Christ. And God thus brings home His many sons to glory, through that Captain of their salvation who was perfect through sufferings.

CHAPTER XX.

AT THAT TIME YE WERE WITHOUT CHRIST.—EPHESIANS ii. 12.

DIFFICULTIES.

MAN's relation to the Divine Saviour in a state of grace on earth, and in a state of future glory, we have already considered. There is a third relation of man to the same Saviour, which deserves our most serious and deliberate attention. It is the state of man *without Christ*. I wish now to speak of this condition, and of the misery, danger, and guilt, which distinguish it. "At that time ye were without Christ." The Apostle speaks to those who had been since made the spiritual workmanship of God,—created anew in Christ Jesus, by the Holy Ghost. He exhorts them to remember the time past of their lives, when they were without Christ,—strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. He calls upon them for thankfulness and praise to God, that now, they who were afar off, had been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. The condition which is here described, as it referred to them, was a past condition. But as it applies to multitudes of others, it is a present condition, and an abiding condition,—nay, it is a chosen and loved condition. I

speak of it now, in relation to these last ; and I would call their minds to some peculiar facts, which are the attributes and distinctions of a man who is without Christ.

This condition in itself, is perfectly discriminated and precise. A man without Christ, is simply, a man destitute of the peculiar benefits which Christ bestows ;—exposed to the peculiar sorrows, from which Christ relieves ;—and bearing the peculiar burdens from which Christ delivers. Who are the special individuals involved in this description, I do not now stop to consider. I wish to speak of the condition itself. Are any of my readers convinced that this condition is their present one ? I speak to them. In former pages, we have considered the way and methods by which sinful men are made partakers of Christ, and the distinctions which mark those who are in Christ. I desire now to describe some of the attributes of their condition, who are without Christ,—who have no real spiritual union of their souls with Him, and no partnership in His joys and glory. To them is this message sent. O that they may have an heart to consider, and to improve it ;—the wish, and the determination, and the power to fly to the Glorious Saviour of men, from the burdens and woes which this condition heaps upon them.

I would first consider the *unhappiness* of the man who is without Christ. I do not mean merely the unhappiness which he now actually experiences and perceives, because this is far lessened by the compensating pleasures which he derives from sin. His mind is blinded to the

whole facts of his condition, by the delusions of present things. I speak of the misery of his condition, as it is apparent to those who now understand it; and as it will be fearfully apparent in the future experience of his soul to himself. In this consideration, I will not refer to merely possible attendants upon his condition, which he may perhaps in some way avoid, but simply consider the misery which grows for him, out of this one fact, that he is without Christ.

There are large and various classes of sorrows which are inherent in the condition of man as a mortal creature. His joints are loosed in sickness, and his bread is dipped in tears, and he sits repeatedly upon the margin of the grave, to mourn in the bitterness of his soul, refusing to be comforted. But even these sorrows are the lineal consequences of sin; and it is perfectly just and reasonable to speak of them as the attributes of a sinful course, and the necessary portion of a sinful man; and to charge them upon him as the attendants and characteristics of his condition. These are, however, rather the secondary, than the immediate results of transgression. And they are endured perhaps as largely, and as bitterly, by the man whose sins have been forgiven, as by the man who is still unpardoned;—by the man who is in Christ, as by the man who is without Christ;—though the former has, under the pressure of these burdens, a sure and adequate consolation, of which the latter is deprived. While I describe the sorrows of his condition, who has chosen to be without Christ, it would be perfectly to my purpose to show,

how he is obliged to bear all these sorrows without comfort; because his want of consolation under them, comes wholly from this fact, that he is without Christ. But this would not particularly exhibit his real condition, nor the views which I desire especially to impress upon the minds of my readers. I will not wander in this region of merely outward sorrows, to cull the pricking thorns and briars, which I might discover there. There are other far worse evils than these. The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmities; but a wounded spirit who can bear? The peculiar evils which spring from the condition which we are now considering, are not connected with outward sorrows. They are equally pressing, though man be comparatively released from them. The condition of which we speak, is described by a single mere negation. He is *without Christ*. He may not be without money,—without bodily health,—without family or friends,—without honour and applause among men,—without great esteem of himself,—but he is without Christ. And of course, he is necessarily destitute of all those advantages, blessings, and comforts, whatever they are, which are peculiarly connected with Christ, and which are bestowed only by Him. It is unhappiness hence arising, which forms the chief attribute of his spiritual condition; and which is to be considered as the peculiar sorrow that presses upon him. It is unhappiness in connection with his future safety; and unhappiness connected with his present state of being.

It is unhappiness connected with his future safety. He must live forever, and yet he must

accomplish absolute impossibilities for his own salvation ; and unless he can accomplish them, he must forever perish. The only possible alternative in his present condition, is an everlasting condemnation, or the accomplishing of works which no fallen creature can do. This is one circumstance, and it is a tremendous one, of his unhappy condition, simply as he is without Christ, and wholly because he is so. It remains a circumstance indissolubly connected with this condition. If he be ready, though thus afar off from hope and safety, to be brought nigh by the blood of Christ, to the God whom he has rejected, this tremendous evil may be avoided. But it can be avoided in no other way. The man without Christ, still holds fast to a delusive hope of final safety. He tries to comfort himself with this in his views of the future. But he does not for a moment really consider the ground upon which he stands. To sustain this hope, and give it reality, I say he must accomplish absolute impossibilities. Unless he can succeed in this, he must perish forever ; he cannot escape the damnation of hell.

He must *perfectly justify his own soul* in the sight of an infinitely Holy Judge, and present to Him a perfect obedience of His commands. There can be no just hope of eternal life, which is not founded upon an entire obedience of divine commands. The simple offer which is made to man, is, the man that doeth these things shall live by them. This is the unalterable rule of the government of God. But the individual application of this rule would inevitably shut out from the

hope of life, the whole race of fallen men, not one of whom has ever done, or can ever do, the things which are written in the divine commandments. God has therefore mercifully provided for man a glorious substitute and representative, who has offered a perfect and complete obedience for him. He has graciously accepted the voluntary obedience of this sufficient surety for man, in behalf of those who believe in Him. They are thus made partakers of His merit. By the obedience of this one, they are made righteous. The man who is in Christ, is a partaker of this gift of God. He is justified before God, freely by His grace. He is released forever from the penalty of sin. He is entitled to the eternal rewards of obedience, because, though he is not in himself perfectly obedient, by any excellence of his own; yet in his divinely appointed Representative, he possesses the perfect obedience of divine commands, which is a title to reward, and a full foundation for hope. The Lord has become his righteousness, and in Him, he is justified, and glories.

But the man without Christ, stands simply and wholly upon his own ground. He must establish the sufficiency of his own merit to meet the demands of God. He has neither part nor lot in the gracious provision which a Saviour has made for those who believe in Him. All this he has voluntarily cast away. His present condition without Christ, is one of his own choice. If, therefore, he hope for a future acceptance and reward, he must assume the obligation to furnish the perfect obedience to the divine law which God requires. He hears the annunciation, the man that doeth

these things shall live by them. He agrees to the terms. He accepts the offer. He binds himself to stand or fall for eternity, by the result. But how can this agreement ever be fulfilled? He sets out upon the plan, a bankrupt from the very beginning. With the misery of a mind and conscience, enlightened far beyond the will or power of the heart to follow; he finds, in every step of the course which he has proposed to finish, that he cannot do the things which he would. He feels himself unceasingly lashed forward to an effort, which it is impossible for him to make,—goaded to an attainment which he can never reach. There is no day of his life, in which he can justify himself. And when the whole amount of his own righteousness is estimated by his own conscience and judgment of himself, it seems to him to be, and it is indeed, nothing but a covering of filthy rags, for a more polluted soul.

Consider, then, the wretched issue to which he is brought by this plan of his own adoption. The penalty of disobedience, the wages of sin, is death. It is still more necessarily, and certainly so, to the man who rejects the remedy which God has mercifully provided and revealed. If, then, a man without Christ, could furnish an obedience to God, faultless in every particular but a single transgression, that one defect would necessarily annihilate the whole. You will remember that his hope of life, his claim to glory and reward, is a matter of distinct agreement and contract. The terms of this agreement are most specific and precise. God promises eternal life to man, for the perfect obedience of man to His

commands. And this man has entered into the obligation to furnish precisely what God requires. If a man shall sell a property for ten thousand pounds, is he unjust in refusing to deliver it, though but half, or three-fourths of the sum be paid? Nay, is it not the operation of the law continually, that the portion which is paid, is forfeited and lost, from the default of making up the remainder, which is also due?

But does a man ask, what has the law to do in this case? I pray you to remark, that the law has every thing to do, and nothing else can be considered. The man without Christ, casts away the offer of mercy at the very commencement of his course, in his rejection of a provided Saviour. He voluntarily puts himself upon the ground of his own obedience, and God agrees without hesitation, to accept it. This do, and thou shalt live;—I will do this, or die;—is the mutual agreement. Now I beseech you to remember, that this is not God's plan for weak and fallen man. He well knows how impossible it is that man should ever accomplish it. He has therefore opened a plan of grace, which freely justifies the many guilty, by the obedience of one mighty and appointed Saviour. This is man's determined plan for himself. This he will have, and he will have no other. He puts himself, by his own choice, upon the ground of law. If then, he come short in a single particular;—if the uttermost farthing be left unpaid, the contract is as much annihilated, and the hope which rested upon its fulfilment is as much destroyed, as if there had been nothing done towards the end proposed.

But how absurd it is to talk about small deficiencies, and in single particulars, in regard to a man who drinketh up iniquity like water ! So far is the man without Christ from presenting an obedience of his own, adequate to the known commands of God, or even substantially, in any proportion, a fulfilment of his agreement with God, that the most entire bankrupt the world has ever known in its business, is not more completely insolvent than he. A single penny towards the supposed ten thousand pounds demanded and promised for the property sold, is a larger proportion of the payment, than the sinner has ever made to God. And the man might in this supposed instance, more reasonably ask and expect the acknowledged title to the property concerned ; than can any man, in the right of his own obedience, ask or expect that eternal life which is the reward of spotless merit and obedience alone. The sinner has done nothing, absolutely nothing, that can be reckoned as obedience to God. And yet in his position without Christ, he must deserve and claim an everlasting recompense of glory, upon the ground of his own obedience alone.

I have already remarked, he sets out upon this plan, a bankrupt at the very commencement. Original, inherent sin, and guilt and exposure to punishment, its necessary attendant, have stained and tainted every act of his life from the beginning. Every work of his life has therefore been wholly defective. No one act, however minute, however transitory, has ever passed from him unstained. How can an accumulation of works,

all defective in their particulars, constitute an obedience perfect as a whole ? They are defective even in his own examination of their character. There has not been an hour, or an act, in the whole course of his days, upon which he would be willing to cast himself, though he should be allowed the privilege of selection for himself, and every thing else should be forgotten by divine agreement. He would shudder to have an exposure and analysis of this single point of his own selection by the penetrating power of divine holiness, as the test by which his eternity should be finally decided. Never for an hour, have his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, been given to the love of God. And while this inherent impurity has rendered every act defective, however excellent its superficial appearance might be ; there have been, in every day of his life, a multitude of sins,—positive known transgressions,—transgressions which he cannot deny or cover,—from which he has experienced deep regret and shame,—and to which he cannot blind his eyes, by any attempt at excuse. His own heart condemns him. And yet with this conscious defect in the very best that he hath ever done, and with this load of multiplied transgressions lying upon his conscious soul ; he binds his hopes to his ability to furnish God with a perfect obedience to His commands, and pledges himself to endure the dreadful and unchanging consequences of his failure. How awful is this condition ! How absurd is this hope ! He rejects the offer of divine mercy in the Lord Jesus Christ. He refuses to rest the dependance of his

soul upon the provisions and promises of grace in Him. He goes on toward the fixed point of judgment, in the boast of his own sufficiency to meet its demands. And he most unreasonably supposes, that God will at last concede to his pride, and will not be extreme to mark what he has done amiss. He reads it written by God himself, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." He confesses to himself, that he is far, inconceivably far, from this unbroken continuance in well-doing; and yet he casts an all-sufficient Saviour completely from him, and agrees to be, and to be judged, and to be sentenced, without Christ. To accomplish his safety, he must effect an absolute impossibility. In default of this, he must bear the solemn curse of God forever.

What unhappiness is this! How miserable beyond our present power of conception is such a condition! How can such a man escape the fearful consequences of unpardoned sin? A flaming sword turns every way to guard the tree of life from his approach. The mount of God is fenced around against him. Blackness, and darkness, and tempest, crown its summit with unutterable terrors. The God who reigns there, is wholly and forever inaccessible to him. He draws nigh to Him but to be rejected in confusion and dismay. He beholds the chosen Mediator pass up before him, and open in His perfect obedience for man, a new and living way to God. He sees a holy, happy throng clothed in garments of salvation, and covered with a robe of righteousness by Him, follow Him with songs of triumph

to His glory. They are complete in Him. It is God who justifieth, and there is no one to condemn. It is Christ that died for them—yea, rather that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for them. They cast their crowns at his feet. They sing in entire self-renunciation, “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory. Thou alone art worthy, and all live in thee.” The self-justifying sinner sees all this triumphant, glorious array. He hears the Saviour begging him also to follow Him, in tones of kindness, clear, and soft, and winning, as the music of the heavens; and offering to present him also, before the throne of God, faultless and with exceeding joy. But there is a madness in the hearts of men. The infatuated sinner rejects this whole provision of grace; casts away from him the precious atonement, and the perfect righteousness which the Gospel proclaims;—refuses all the invitations of a suffering, exalted Redeemer; and chooses to live and die without Christ, whatever may be the results of his determination. He will plunge through a river of atoning blood, to seek the everlasting damnation which lies buried at the bottom. He might be freely saved in the merit of the Lord Jesus. But no!—He prefers to rest upon an impossible merit of his own. He will force the barriers which guard the mount, or he will perish in the attempt. He will compel the law of God to justify him, or he will sink in death. He will not let go his integrity until he die. He will try the hazard of answering for himself. He will peril every thing upon this determina-

tion. And if he cannot scale the battlements of heaven, and place upon his own head the crown of his own righteousness, he will sink into the blackness of darkness forever. Must he not therefore sink? Does he not rest his hope of safety upon the accomplishment of an entire impossibility? He can never justify himself. He cannot answer to God, for one of a thousand of his faults. He has therefore no hope. He must be without God forever. He will dwell in the everlasting burnings, which are the result,—the known, determined, and forewarned result, of his own selection and course.

This is one point of the misery of the man who is without Christ. O that all who read these pages, might solemnly think of this!—That sinners might lay to heart the dangerous and distressing condition in which their rejection of a Saviour places them, and fly for refuge to that sure and blessed hope which God has set before them in His beloved Son. In Him there is eternal rest, and whosoever cometh to Him, shall in no wise be cast out. May I not entreat them, by all the amazing mercies of a reconciling God, to renounce the folly of their vain attempts, and to submit themselves, in a living faith, freely and entirely to the justifying Saviour. He is near them,—ready to receive them,—waiting to bless them. And if with sincere self-renunciation they are ready to accept Him, to trust themselves to Him, to rest their souls upon Him, He will love them with an everlasting love, and save them with a complete salvation.

CHAPTER XXI.

CONTESTS.

“AT that time” says the Apostle to the Ephesians, “ye were without Christ.” This was their condition in a state of unpardoned guilt. “At that time;”—it was when they were Gentiles, unconverted, dead in sins, walking according to the course of this world, under the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience; when they had their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and the mind. At that time, they who, when the Apostle wrote to them, had been brought nigh by the blood of Christ, had found peace with God, and had obtained in Christ, an access by one Spirit unto the Father;—“at that time they were without Christ.” This was a simple and sufficient designation of their condition. And it is an equally descriptive exhibition of all others, who are in a similar state of unpardoned guilt, and in the rebellion of their hearts, far off from God.

Taking these words, as thus descriptive of a known and conscious condition of man in relation to the Saviour of men, I proposed to speak of the unhappiness of this condition. Considering this unhappiness in connection with the future safety

which man desires, I have attempted to display it, in the fact, that man must accomplish impossible things for his own salvation, or perish, if he cannot succeed. One of these impossible things,—the perfect justification of his own soul before God,—we have considered. I propose to exhibit some other items in this list, showing the miserable condition which a man selects for himself, who is willing to be without Christ. He must accomplish impossible things for his own salvation, or he must be destroyed forever. And yet, the aggregate of these constitute but a single point of the unhappiness of his condition;—simply that which arises from his connection with a future world. There are other various sources of unhappiness, remaining for him still, besides this fruitful and important one. But we will proceed a little farther with this.

The man without Christ, must not only furnish for himself a perfect obedience of divine commands,—he must also *entirely renew and sanctify his own nature within*, to render himself adapted and meet for the inheritance which he seeks. He must acquire for himself, the image and character of God, that he may be prepared, and made ready, for the pure and perfect state, which is the only alternative to an everlasting condition of darkness and despair in a world to come. Man cannot come into the holy presence of God, but with the mind and nature which belongs to that glorious state. This is a truth perfectly self-evident to the mind of man. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. And man who loves

darkness, and walks in darkness, and desires not the light, can have no dwelling-place with Him.

Will an earthly prince allow his halls to be filled with loathsome, naked sots, or noisy rude blasphemers? Will the refinement of human society receive into its intimacy and embrace, the filthy and corrupt wanderers of the haunts of guilt? Yet how little does this difference in character and circumstances, compare with the one now under our view. Into the presence of the God of holiness, nothing can enter that in any wise defileth, or worketh an abomination. Unholy beings will be more certainly excluded thence, than foul lepers from the royal couch of earthly grandeur. But all men are by nature unholy, the children of wrath, following after all evil. There is no man who sinneth not. God has therefore mercifully provided a fountain for human cleansing. He has opened in Christ, the appointed Saviour, all sufficient means of spiritual purity to those who believe in Him. He can cleanse them, and purge them, until they are whiter than snow. He will put His Spirit within them, and write His laws upon their hearts. He will sanctify them wholly by the imparted influences of the Holy Ghost. In this gracious renovation of their character and nature, He will make them equal unto the angels, and enable them in the beauties of holiness, to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever. While this Glorious Saviour as their representative and Surety, bestows upon them, in His own personal obedience imputed unto them, a sure title to the inheritance of glory; He also gives them in the renewing of their na-

ture, and in the communication to them, of His own image, the power to enjoy, and the preparation to receive, the kingdom provided for them before the foundation of the world, and purchased and secured by His obedience for them. This is the happy state of those who are in Christ, even of all who believe in His name. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Happy are the people, whose God is the Lord.

But this is a condition peculiar to them. An unconverted man, a man without Christ, remaining so, is of necessity, a lost man. Jesus has said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The man without Christ can have no hope therefore of eternal life, until his heart has been renewed to the love of holiness, and his nature has become conformed to the image and will of God. In his present condition, he assumes the obligation and responsibility of this upon himself. If he can accomplish it by his own power, he may enjoy a rational hope of life, so far as this one point is concerned. If he cannot, he must perish forever. Every man without Christ assumes this whole hazard, and throws himself completely upon it. He agrees to stand or fall by the result of this assumption.

But what is the prospect of his success? What possibility is there of his effecting thus his own security? I pray you to examine the case in its particulars. See how little he can do towards the change of his own character, even in the external acts of his life. He often contends with

the most intense earnestness, and with the utmost perseverance, through many years, against a single outward habit of conscious iniquity. Forgetting every other enemy in himself but this single one, he attempts to grapple in a single, deadly conflict with this alone. He wrestles with a tremendous convulsive struggle. Though often thrown, and rolled, and tumbled in the dust, he rises again and again, bleeding and torn, to grasp his hateful antagonist again. What strength does he put forth ! What energy does he consecrate to the perilous contest ! But how distressing is the result ! How often, after all this tumultuous conflict, does nature sink, exhausted with resistance ; and this one triumphant lust, scoffing at the weakness of man, sit with its foot upon his neck, and laugh in derision at the wretchedness and degradation of its victim. Yet all this effort has been devoted, not to a changing the nature of man, but to the simple destruction of a single development or offshoot of that nature. It has been spent, and has wasted the man himself, not for the correction or the attainment of a principle ; but for the subjection of the mere fruits of a single tolerated principle in outward acts. It has been the unavailing chase of a solitary serpent, while myriads are left, to grow and gather strength for equal contests ; and the very intensity of pursuit which is thus devoted to one, has been just so much done towards drawing off the vigilance and labour which might prevent the increasing power of all the residue. And yet if the man were successful in this effort, to what does it amount ? To gain a character

and meetness for heaven, is not to alter one, or all the habits of the outward life merely. The heart in its affections, the mind in its judgments, and the will in its choice, are all to be changed and renewed. All this the man without Christ must do for himself, or perish. And no amount of mere outward restraint or regulation has any necessary connection with this. But how absurd and futile, are all the attempts of man to change and purify these fountains of the character! His purposes and efforts in opposition to the *acts* of sin, are generally but cobwebs to catch lions. And all that he can do, by any strength of his own, to eradicate the *principles* of sin from within his heart, is even more ridiculous and weak. He cannot alter one single habit of his sinful nature. He can hardly repress or restrain one, but by giving to some other one a greater prominence, and thus simply making a revolution in the aspects of his iniquity. And yet this alteration, this complete renovation of his whole sinful nature, must be effected, or he can never see the face of God and live. He can have no hope of salvation, but in the accomplishment of this work in its whole extent. So far as any mere efforts of his own are concerned, he remains in his sins, and the wrath of God abideth on him.

How miserable is this condition! Yet the deluded man who is without Christ, voluntarily thrusts himself into it, and assumes upon himself the responsibility of accomplishing this impossible work. He will not be persuaded to receive as a free gift, that which he can never attain by his own merit,—or to allow another to do for him,

with divine power, that which he can never accomplish by human strength. But he will spend his life, if he be at all sincere in his desire to escape the wrath to come, in this absurd and fruitless attempt. The alternative before him is solemn and dreadful. He must bring a clean thing out of an unclean. He must exercise creative power in the new creation of himself. If he cannot do it, he must go out with unholy and rejected beings, to make his abode in the blackness of darkness forever, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. He must be renewed in his whole nature, or he must perish eternally. The Saviour offers him divine power, to renew him in holiness after the perfect image of God. He proposes to adopt him into an eternal fellowship with himself, justifying him completely in His own righteousness, and sanctifying him wholly by His divine power. But he refuses to have the power of Christ rest upon him, and chooses rather to be without Christ, whatever the result shall be. He determines to assume the whole responsibility of renewing his own soul, and acquiring for himself, by his own efforts, a character which shall live in heaven, and be adequate for its bliss ; —a character which shall deserve and demand the divine approval,—or to abide by the result of his failure. The attainment is, for him, by any strength of his own, an absolute impossibility ; and he must perish in an everlasting ruin, because he cannot effect it. O, how miserable is this condition ! All the condemnation of sin is upon him. All the sorrows of a world of punishment are staring him in the face ; and he is doomed to go down

to the pit in final despair, or effect an absolute impossibility for his escape. With all this fearful load upon him, and still refusing the saving power of a Mighty Redeemer, so freely offered to him, how can he escape the damnation of hell?

But even this is not the whole exhibition of the work which the sinner must accomplish. Besides the justification of his own soul, and the renewal of his own nature, he must *conquer and destroy insuperable enemies*, who oppose him in his path to holiness and God. These spiritual enemies are leagued in opposition to all who would seek a better and heavenly country, and contend with them in every step of their progress. The man who is in Christ, justified and renewed by grace, meets them as certainly and as painfully as others. But for him there is no fear in the contest. An Omnipotent Lord has become the Captain of his salvation, and leads him on infallibly to glory, whatever may oppose him. Chariots of fire and horses of fire surround him on every side. Though hosts of enemies should encamp against him, his heart will not fear. He is more than a conqueror, through the conquering power of his mighty Lord. No weapon that is formed against him can prosper. No enemy can arrest his progress to the kingdom which God hath promised to him, and which cannot be removed. He may unceasingly sing his song of triumph, "Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory, through my Lord Jesus Christ." This victory over all spiritual enemies is indispensable. No man can come to Zion who does not effect it. The throne is for those who have overcome. Those who have been over-

come in this contest, are led off in eternal bondage,—bound in chains of everlasting darkness,—imprisoned where there is no discharge. The warfare is inevitable. The man who is without Christ has no release from it. But he has no assistance to gain the victory. If he be ready to yield himself at once a willing captive to sin, there certainly will be no contest for him, except the faint strivings of the Spirit within him to lead him to a better life. He will go on as a captive, a prisoner in chains, to be trodden under the feet of enemies, and to lie down at last in everlasting burnings. This is not, however, the view I wish now to take of the man without Christ. I suppose him determined and hoping to be saved,—anxious to find an eternal rest. To accomplish this determination, and to settle this anxiety, while he casts from him the power of Christ, he must in his own strength, overcome hosts of insuperable foes.

He must contend with, and conquer himself;—and if there were not an enemy in his path, but those which are created and brought into being, from his own heart; even if no foreign influence were brought to their help, he would find the victory over them absolutely impossible. He cannot be urged to a single holy thought, or a desire for salvation, but a deceitful and desperately wicked heart within, throws innumerable evils in his way. Appetites, affections, and propensities of the most unholy character, rise up into being in multitudes. They are as persevering and as tenacious of life, as they are numerous.—And all these he must conquer for himself. The Holy Scriptures assure

him (*Jer.* iv. 22.) that it is easier to set the sand for a bound to the sea, that it cannot pass, than it is to correct a revolting and a rebellious heart. Yet he must do this. And his contest with this, is not with a single enemy, that may be finally slain by a single successful blow; nor with an army, that stands or falls together as one man. It is with each individual of the host in a separate personal encounter. For the man who is in Christ, the whole heart and nature have been changed, and renewed by divine power. The dominion and principles of sin have been destroyed. But this single complete renovation, man cannot accomplish for himself. When he contends, it must necessarily be with each separate propensity and habit of sin alone. And even in this, it is not with sinful habits in their embryo state within, annihilating if successful, the source of the evil. No. He turns the stream;—he dams it up;—he digs a well to sink it. But after all his efforts, the fountain still flows; and his hopeless toil is to be renewed and repeated every day. These enemies from within himself are innumerable. They spring upon him when he least expects it. They assume every possible variety of shape. They start into being far more rapidly, from the very resistance which he makes. The deep experience of their influence, and the unceasing perception of their number and power, will compel him to cry out with the Psalmist, “Who can understand his errors?” though he may never be really brought to the Psalmist’s humble prayer, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep thy servant back from presumptuous sins.” He is far more easily led to

despair in himself, than he is to a real renunciation of himself, and an humble calling upon God. And it is hardly possible that he should long continue this unavailing contest within himself, without being brought to absolute despair. For however long continued, the victory is still utterly beyond his reach.

Besides these foes in himself, he has to overcome the opposition of the world around. I mean by this, all the outward difficulties which arise from his present condition of being. The contest which he is carrying on within himself, is under the utmost possible disadvantage, from the nature of the circumstances around him. Every thing abroad ministers strength to his internal enemies. Nothing in all this range increases his power to overcome them. It is not merely the opposition of worldly men that I mean, when I speak of this contest with the world. This portion of the conflict is comparatively, but a small matter. Every thing around man, animate and inanimate, to a mind at war with God, is made to furnish strength to its rebellion. The sinner's heart, like the fabled son of earth who gathered new strength from every fall upon the bosom of his mother, gains in every connection with outward things, additional power for his opposition to God. The remedy for this to man, is not, to retire from these necessary circumstances of his condition, as some under this painful experience, fain would do; but to have his own heart within transformed and changed by the divine power of the Holy Spirit, so that outward things under this heavenly ministration, may constrain him to obedience, and not aid him in re-

bellion. But so long as he remains without Christ,—unreconciled to God,—living for himself,—devoted to this outward world, and careless of eternity; every earthly scene will supply new vigour to his cherished spirit of hostility to God. All this outward ministration to his rebellion, and opposition to his obedience, the sinner who rejects a Saviour, must conquer for himself in an endless succession of separate struggles, or he must perish under the weight of evil, which his own sinful soul has thus gathered upon itself.

And yet, as if all this opposition were not enough to bind him in bondage under sin, there is an evil spiritual influence,—an adversary who is unseen, wily, and powerful,—who throws all his energy in this now unequal warfare, upon the most powerful and the conquering side. And man, feeble, dispirited, certain to be overcome,—must stand and fight alone, amidst uncounted enemies, against this fearful power of evil, and must conquer by his own power, or must perish. Any single individual of this host, in any department of this tremendous opposition to his soul's interests, would be more than he could conquer. In any single conflict, with any selected spiritual foe, with no foreign assistance,—though he might contend through the whole course of his life, he would inevitably have been overcome at last. And still, in rejecting a Saviour, whom God has mercifully appointed and revealed, he casts away the offer of divine strength, and throws himself upon his own unassisted power, in his contest with the whole combined. O, how absurd, how impossible is this undertaking! Jesus conquers for His people, with

almighty power, and makes them conquerors over all, in Him. They are of good cheer in every contest, because he has already overcome in their behalf. They who are in Christ, are thus already conquerors. They can never perish, nor shall any one pluck them out of His hand. They who are without Christ, must conquer for themselves, or be destroyed. And yet so infatuating is the spirit of rebellion, that in multitudes of instances, they will rather cling to this impossibility, than embrace a victory already finished, and given freely to them by the Great Conqueror who hath overcome all for man. What must be the inevitable result of this contest? Will they not certainly be destroyed? Yes; their neglected, struggling souls will perish. Their spiritual interests and hopes will be torn limb from limb, by contending enemies; and they be driven away in their wickedness, dragged from the field at last, conquered and lifeless, by scoffing and triumphant foes.

How great is the wretchedness of such persons! And yet these three points which have been now presented, constitute but a single general aspect of the unhappiness of the man who is without Christ. It is merely that which is connected with his hope of future safety. To gain security for his soul, the security which he seeks and expects, he dooms himself to accomplish these absolute impossibilities. If he cannot meet the crisis with success, he must sink and perish eternally. These things must be done for every man, who would become a partaker of the kingdom of God. They are done for every real believer in the Lord Jesus, by His divine power. They must be done by

the man who rejects the Saviour, for himself. Now what condition for man can be more wretched than this? How painful is this observation of his state? We see him unnecessarily contending with impossibilities;—having noble desires and plans set before him, which he can never fulfil;—seeking a great and permanent good which is entirely beyond his reach. And all this misery is of his own choice. The very good which he desires,—the triumph which he seeks,—is freely offered to his acceptance in a provided Saviour. He may have all, and abound in Him. Unsearchable riches of grace are pressed upon his enjoyment in this Redeeming Lord, who stands at the door and knocks in vain. But all this he voluntarily rejects. He deliberately throws himself upon the ground of his own merit, and his own power. He assumes the whole responsibility of his own condition and prospects. He signs with his own hand, the warrant for his own destruction. O that men were wise, and would consider their latter end: that they could be persuaded to fly from their condition of sorrow, and find in a Conquering Saviour, the peace they need!

CHAPTER XXII.

UNHAPPINESS.

THE sad condition of man without a Saviour, may be considered by us, under several aspects. It has many peculiarities of its own, which identify it and uniformly attend upon it. I proposed to speak of its unhappiness, its danger, and its guilt, as combining to illustrate the circumstances and prospects by which it is distinguished. One view of this unhappiness we have already taken; the one which is connected with the future prospects and safety of the man without Christ. To make the salvation of his soul secure upon the ground on which he stands, he must accomplish absolute impossibilities. He therefore shuts himself out of all hope, and all means of hope, in his voluntary rejection of an offered Saviour, the condition which he has chosen for himself. He has refused deliverance in the only name in which it can be offered among men, and must, therefore, remain under condemnation, with the wrath of God abiding on him.

I would now speak of the unhappiness of his condition in his present state. Supposing that he has no plans of salvation for the future, he is not less an unhappy man in his present condition, and

for the same simple reason, that he is without Christ. As under our former view, the putting him in possession of a sufficient Saviour, the bringing of his soul to Christ, would have removed all his difficulties and answered all the questions and hopes of his soul; so in the view of his condition which we propose now to take, his coming to Christ, and accepting the divine offers of forgiveness and eternal life in Him; the casting of his soul upon the promises of God, proposed and secured in Christ, would take away all the bitterness of his cup, and make him to rejoice in the portion of his appointed inheritance, with confidence and delight. But here again I would remark, that in this view of the unhappiness of man, I do not mean to cull the gloomy features of outward misery, as they are seen in the mere circumstances of man, and to charge them as the habitual portion of the man without Christ. They are often not his portion. He is frequently one of those who prosper in the world, and heap up its gains and pleasures for their enjoyment. Neither are these outward sorrows always, indeed, a portion of sorrow merely. Paul and Silas could sing praises in the dungeon, and Lazarus could feed upon God's hidden manna, while perishing with hunger at the rich man's gate. The pirate's dungeon, and the martyr's dungeon, built equally of stone, in damp and gloomy darkness, may look in all respects alike. But there is a peace-giving power present in the one, which covers in oblivion the gloom and remorse which remain as the sole characteristics of the other. The martyr's dungeon is heaven;—the pirate's dungeon is hell, in

living anticipation. These outward facts of temporary earthly misery, are not the rightful index of the character and condition of man. And I pass them over, to speak of a misery which is peculiar and abiding; which is the inevitable portion of the man without Christ, and is only to be removed by a change in this essential particular of his condition;—a change by the Spirit of God, which will bring him to find his portion in a Saviour's goodness, and in the enjoyment of the favour of God, reconciled through Him.

The man without Christ has a portion of sorrows in his present condition, which appertain peculiarly to his condition, and which are only to be avoided in a change of that.

He is *destitute of all peace of conscience*. And in the very proportion in which he becomes acquainted with his own character and spiritual state, is this found to be the fact. God has set up a witness in the human breast, which, to the degree of light and knowledge which it receives, testifies always against the guiltiness of man. Man may become, perhaps, so seared and hardened in iniquity, that for a time his conscience may be stupified, and cease to speak. He may be so deluded by the indulgence of appetite, and besotted in a course of sensuality, that the accusations of his conscience may, for a season, be overwhelmed and unheeded. But such facts constitute exceptions in the history of human life. And the individuals in whose experience they occur, are themselves, also, exceptions among mankind. The rule for man is, that his transgressions of known duties, have remorse and sorrow for their

uniform attendants. And whenever the dream of appetite and the pleasure of indulgence have passed away, man finds himself suffering the terrors of God with a troubled mind. Reflection upon himself speaks out the wrath and judgment of God revealed against him. The anguish which flows from this distressing source is frequently so intolerable, that his soul chooses death rather than life. Conviction of sin is but the setting in operation, this machinery of judgment and sorrow, and making man to feel, how evil and bitter a thing it is to depart from the Living God. And when this awakened and convinced conscience testifies, and lifts up its awful voice against the sins of men, man is driven under its lash to seek some shelter in which he may find a refuge for himself. Ignorant of God's righteousness, he goes about to establish a righteousness for himself. Rejecting an offered Saviour, perfectly able to support and pardon, he undertakes to be a saviour for himself. He will renovate his own character in a thousand purposes and efforts for amendment. He will pay the penalty of his sins in money, in labour, or in blood. He will task his invention, to find some method in which he may compensate for the evils which he feels he has done by his transgressions. And each of all these efforts and plans, whether public or secret, announces the fact, that his own heart condemns him, and his guilty conscience has no rest or peace. The whole secret and principle of superstition, in all its endless schemes, is but a conscience awakened and alarmed by sin, and destitute of all real means or assurance of peace. This

is a burden which the soul of man cannot endure ; and no excesses of voluntary suffering are weighed in the comparison, if they may but furnish the peace which the sinner needs.

But all these inventions and labours are completely useless. Nothing can give peace to a consciously guilty man, but the clear perception, and the sincere acceptance of that glorious offering for sin, which God has revealed as made in the death of Jesus Christ ; and which He has offered freely to the acceptance and enjoyment of the guilty. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. This Saviour is our peace. And when our faith receives the truth of His revelation, and adopts the provision which He has made, as the foundation of our hope ; pleading for a justification before God, through His obedience and death, that we may be saved from wrath in Him ; then our hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience, and we have hope in God,—yea, we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Our peace flows down like a river. Our righteousness is as the waves of the sea. The man who is in Christ has this peace. He has brought his burden of guilt to the altar which God has established in His Son ; he has laid his heavy load upon this divine and perfect sacrifice ; and his iniquities are remembered no more against him forever. His sins appear no more in judgment. He is now, not what he is in himself, guilty and condemned ; but what he is in Christ, pardoned, justified, and at peace.

But the man without Christ, can have no peace. No efforts of his own will remove the load which lies upon him. His guilt is there, and haunts him

still. His outward troubles only bring it to his remembrance anew, and the more distinctly. And however bitter may be his cup, this is the thing which lies at the bottom, and disseminates its more intolerable bitterness through the whole. O, what misery is this! What scalding tears are shed in secret! What anguish, like a secret twining serpent stings within, when the outward appearance would conceal it all! What sorrow without consolation, asking for relief within in vain, makes up the portion of the man without Christ! And yet, this portion of distress he chooses, rather than he will submit to free forgiveness, and find his peace in the Lamb of God's providing. He will walk in darkness through his earthly days, and meet his wretched doom at last in the eternal perpetuation of all this unappeased remorse, rather than come, to sit down at the feet of Jesus, clothed, converted, pardoned, loved, and redeemed forever, by the unsearchable riches of His grace.

The man without Christ, is without *contentment* in his present condition. He is here the victim of unceasing disquietude. The only view of the present life, which is consistent with peace of mind, is that which considers it a place and scene of education for eternity; a plan of God's wise and gracious government for the preparation of His people for himself. The converted and renewed man, sheltered in the obedience, and secured by the power of his accepted Saviour, feels and knows himself to be a part of the heritage of the Lord, having all his wants regarded, and his condition considered and provided for, in

the court of heaven. All things must eventually work together for his good. Darkness and sorrow must ripen into light and glory. He is thus taught, in the view which is given to him of the connection between the present and a future world, in whatsoever state he is for a season, therewith to be content; knowing both how to abound and how to suffer need. He sees with joy, the perfect sovereignty of God. He submits with filial confidence to His authority. He is contented to be offered a living sacrifice to the honour of His name. He is thus kept in perfect peace, while his heart is stayed upon an unchangeable and immovable God, in whose hands are the issues of life and death. But this is not the result of any peculiar arrangement of his earthly concerns. It is simply the fruit of his relation to Christ, and of his union with Him. Dwelling in the confidence of faith, under the divine shadow and protection, his main and permanent interests are all secure. Nothing can separate him from that love of God, which is in Christ Jesus the Lord. And, though he may be tried beyond other men in outward things, his bow abides in strength, by the might of his covenant, everlasting God.

But the man who is without Christ, has no such inward principle of contentment under the providence of God. God does not seem to him, to be his eternal, unchangeable friend. The ways of God are at war with the interests and plans, which he cherishes for himself. He may be sometimes apparently unmoved. He may, to a degree, become indifferent and unfeeling. He

may even take a kind of pleasure in his bitter hostility of feeling to the government of God. But all this is not contentment or peace. He has no confidence in God. He cannot justify his ways with himself. He feels his losses and sufferings to be hard, unmerited, and unjust. He considers himself to be dealt with unkindly, while disappointment and sorrow seem so often to settle themselves upon his schemes of life. And the best he can do, is to draw himself up, in assumed dignity of feeling, as if he were injured, and known to be injured, by the dealings of his Creator; claiming as a kind of right which at least remains to him, the privilege of unanswerable complaint.

But what a wretched state of mind is this! How poor is the consolation which comes from this fostered bitterness and pride! It seems to be the doom of such a man to walk amidst quicksands;—to fall and sink continually;—while his only comfort is in the indulgence of an impious spirit of rebellion, and the uttering to himself, blaspheming thoughts of God his Maker. The ways of God are not equal, is the expression which often dwells upon his heart, and which may be called the real index of his state of mind. All is darkness in his view. The reason for the present, and the result in the future, seem equally unintelligible. He is driven through a confused and twisted life, to a gloomy uncertainty at the best, beyond the grave;—having never had one filial, contented feeling towards God, nor ever enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of sitting down

to say, Good is the Lord, and good is the word that he hath spoken.

The single reason of all this discontented, bitter state of mind is, that he is without Christ. The simple remedy for it, is to bring him really to Christ, and to reconcile him unto God in Him. This would remove his conscious hostility to God, unite his interests to Him, and thus, in every divine dispensation, publish glad tidings of great joy, and make him thankful, that the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. This would fill him with entire confidence in God, and a perfect readiness that the will of God should be completely done, in him, and in all concerning him. But this simple remedy, the sinful man refuses. He will have no balm from Gilead, and no physician there. He will abide without a Saviour; and thus settle upon himself, the unhappiness of a disquieted, tempest-tossed life, without hope, and without rest, because he is without Christ.

The man without Christ binds himself to *a portion which is wholly unsatisfying*;—in its own nature inadequate to his wants. There are but two portions for man, between which he must always choose for himself. Of the one, the advantages are temporary, while the sorrows are permanent. Of the other, the possible disadvantages are transitory, while the benefits are eternal. But we may cast out of our present view the element of distress on each side, and consider, simply, the several remaining benefits of each. The man without Christ has his portion in this life. This is undoubted. If it be not so, there is no difference between them, and our preaching, and our faith,

are alike in vain. All prospect of a future rest, of an inheritance of peace, we have already seen to be impossible for him. His views and desires must all be satisfied with earthly attainments. Whatever he can get in the present life to answer the appetites of his nature, or the wants of his imagination, may be considered within his reach. But nothing beyond this. This is the portion for him in this condition; and there is nothing better for him than that he should eat and drink, and make his soul enjoy what good he can, in the fruit of his labour here. Solomon estimates this whole portion for him in his acknowledgment of its folly. "Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour. Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun." If man were a creature of mere animal appetite, there would be some nearer proportion between his wants and these provisions. It is not that there is inadequacy in the visible works of God, for the creatures for whose portion they were designed to be sufficient. But man has wants in his own nature which they were not intended to supply; and, therefore, however extensively he may possess these visible goods, he finds himself unsatisfied still. The theory of his nature, and the experience of his history, unite to show him how vain it is to hope for a satisfying portion among the things which perish; while the more extensively he acquires them, beyond the

merely reasonable demands of his animal nature, he but increases with them his cares and sorrows. How painful it is to see him attempting to fill up the fathomless void of his desires with these heaps of emptiness; to see him miserable in their possession, because they meet not his wants, and equally miserable in their loss, because he has nothing else. The world is filled with his complaints;—complaints against God, against his fellow-men, against himself. And why is he thus unsatisfied and wretched? Simply because he is without Christ. Bring him to the Saviour's feet; let him there wash and be made clean and whole; and you make his portion satisfying, because you change the whole current of his desires, and give him that which supplies every defect. The habitation has become an inn, and the field a road; and, looking to a better country, that is, an heavenly, he asks not for the things which he sought before. His portion is now above. His real inheritance is beyond the earth, and every comfort which he receives on earth, is just so much additional to that blessed portion in which, even without earthly comforts, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But how unhappy is his condition while he refuses the offer of this better portion, and clings to this doom of Tantalus as his choice, bringing continually to his lips a cup from which he can never drink! See him miserable in the cares of prosperity;—miserable in the fear of deprivation;—miserable in the endurance of loss;—most miserable when, naked and helpless, he stretches himself out to die, and of all that he has, he can carry nothing away with him.

See, in all these facts of wretchedness, the unsatisfying portion of the man without Christ. The severest condemnation of the present world, and the sharpest satires upon its vanity, may be gathered from the lips and experience of those who have lived and died its votaries. Wretched and un comforted, this they have, that they lie down in sorrow, because they have lived and perish without Christ.

The man without Christ has *no confidence in the prospects of the future*. I speak not now of the actual right to hope. I have before proved him destitute of this. But in his present state, he is really destitute of the actual present confidence in the security of future prospects, which gives the Christian peace. He has no foundation upon which he can rest in his anticipations of days to come. This is a most important element of his unhappiness. Nature and experience announce in the transmitted sorrows of men, the emptiness of the present state. Faith in divine revelation alone unveils the future, and compensates for this defect. For the man in Christ, futurity is settled by divine provisions. One single sentence conveys the whole. "Thou shalt answer for me, O Lord, my God! I will go on in thy strength, and make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only." All things work together for good, to those who love God. But for the man who rejects this simple and all-sufficient provision of triumphant grace, there is but a choice between two schemes of hope. Either there must be no punishment for sin, and no danger for the sinner in a future world; or man's own character and works must

be sufficient to endure the divine inspection, and to merit and insure reward. I shall not now examine the principles of these schemes. It is sufficient, that neither of them probably secures the confidence of any living man. Doubts at the best,—painful, harassing, immovable doubts, rest upon them for all; and none feel able to go forward in either of these schemes with boldness, and say, I know in what I have believed, and I am persuaded it is able to keep that which I have committed to it, unto that day. The man without Christ may often, for a season, be indifferent to the future. He may shut it out of his view. He may live without a calculation upon it. But he has no confidence in his provision for it, and when he is compelled, as he often is, to look upon it, and to consider it, it is only with unavoidable feelings of doubt, uncertainty, and distressing apprehension. The grave, upon the edge of which he stands, is filled with darkness and gloom to his mind, and he is without hope, because he is without Christ. The only remedy for this bitter sorrow, is to bring him really and spiritually to Christ. At His mouth, every question is answered, and every assurance and promise is given. In Him, a foundation is discovered, upon which the soul may rest with perfect confidence, and without fear. And the man without Christ, lives and perishes in this deep darkness and despair, simply because he will not come to Christ, for the security which His grace bestows.

In this wretched condition, the man without Christ is always living. Without peace of conscience,—without contentment in his present con-

dition,—without any satisfying portion,—without confidence in his future prospects,—because he is without Christ. How extreme and dreadful is the unhappiness of this condition! O that a view of its misery might persuade all my readers to fly to Jesus, as the only Saviour, and the only salvation! O, bring your wounded and careworn spirits in simple faith to Him, to receive the fulness of His grace, to become partakers of His peace, and to unite the interests of your souls with the Lord your God, forever! Happy are they who, having received Him in an affectionate, living faith, as their ever-present friend and portion, live under the shadow of his wings, and are presented before God in Him, acceptable, justified, and at peace forever! Such happiness is open to you all. Here is a refuge from every sorrow,—a covert from every storm. Fly to the sanctuary which God has opened, and there be at peace. Consent to be blessed eternally in the fulness of a Saviour's unfailing power, and exhaustless love. Thus shall every sorrow be overpast, and peace which passeth understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

CHAPTER XXIII.

DANGERS.

WE have considered the unhappiness of the man without Christ, viewing him as necessarily shut out of the future hope, and as wholly destitute of the present real comforts of the redeemed man. I purpose now to speak of the *dangers* of his condition. To display these, I shall still confine myself wholly to the facts which peculiarly appertain to the state in which he is, in relation to the Divine Saviour of men; allowing him every other possible advantage of his condition, and confining myself to the dangers which accumulate around him, because he is without Christ. They are dangers which are not necessarily affected, either for their increase or their relief, by earthly circumstances. His is not peculiarly the danger of disease under the blast of pestilence,—or of pain and injury from accidents unforeseen,—or of loss and disappointment from the failure or violation of human contracts,—or of solitude and darkness, from the separation in death, of those whom he has loved. These are the inheritance of man in every condition. The man without Christ may indeed sometimes be especially released from their pressure. He may bask in earthly prosper-

ity from his cradle to his grave ; and go down to death, in all his earthly relations, full of days, riches, and honour ; so that men may look upon his external condition, and say, 'These are they that prosper in the world, they increase in riches ; and be tempted to exclaim in unbelief, "Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency, for all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." But there is a further lesson to be learned upon this subject in the sanctuary of God. There, from the divine revelation, we understand their end. We see the slippery places in which they are set,—the destruction to which they are cast down,—the desolation to which they are brought in a moment,—the terrors with which they are utterly consumed ;—the passing away in an issue of sorrow and despair, of all the dream by which they have been deluded. And when we have conceded to the man without Christ, the possible possession of every earthly gain, we have still remaining the solemn and fearful dangers to which, in this condition of unhappiness and guilt, he is certainly exposed. The necessary issue of his chosen course is everlasting death ; and the peculiar dangers which surround his path, are in the extreme improbabilities, that he will ultimately escape the result to which it so surely leads.

The necessary issue of his course is everlasting death. It is the banishment of his soul from God ; destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of His power. The Holy Spirit, in the fidelity of His warnings to ungodly men, has accumulated the most tremendous expressions, and

the most alarming illustrations, which the knowledge of man can comprehend, or the language of man can supply, to display the future, final sufferings of the unpardoned man. The undoubted reason of this great fidelity of statement is, that God desireth not the death of a sinner, and would not have him ignorantly entrapped, in a sorrow so intolerable and beyond recovery. It is amazing mercy, and not cruelty, or a love of punishment, which has spread out these awful testimonies upon the pages of inspiration. It is like the kindness which builds the light-house upon the sunken rock, and fences off the precipice before concealed from view. We are not, therefore, at liberty to reduce the strength, or to neutralize the force of these descriptions of the results of sin, as if the Omniscient and Infallible God were carried away by unreal imaginations, and took pleasure in the description of horrible fictitious scenes, or loved to see the unnecessary terrors which craft had produced in the bosom of ignorance. When we know that God delighteth in mercy, and that punishment is his strange work, it becomes an undeniable principle of Scriptural interpretation, that every description of punishment and suffering for the ungodly which the Scriptures contain, must be understood to the utmost of its literal, manifest meaning and design. The opposite principle becomes a libel upon the character of God, and unsettles the abiding certainty and truth of all the revelations which He has made. It not only exhibits Him as false in statement, but as vindictive, arbitrary, and cruel, in personal character and feeling. Thus the very plan which, falsely ar-

guing from the supposed mercy of God, would set aside the solemn warnings of His anger against sin, as if they were a reflection upon His mercy ; is the means of exhibiting Him as really unmerciful, because it declares Him to have made, and to delight in, false and unnecessary statements of awful woe and cruelty as the portion of the creatures of His hands. We must, therefore, take the descriptions of the issue of an ungodly course, the result of a perverse rejection of the offered Saviour, which God has given to us, as not only the truth, but as the truth entirely unexaggerated, and precisely limited within the facts of the case.

What, then, are these descriptions ? Shall I dwell upon them ? Shall I present them ? It would be merciful fidelity, the evidence and testimony of a disinterested spirit of love. I say, then, you are to take all the inspired descriptions of the future sorrow and woe of the ungodly, and apply them to the utmost extent of their literal meaning and purpose. When you are warned of an inward gnawing worm that dieth not,—of a consuming fire that cannot be quenched,—of a lake of fire and brimstone, the smoke of which ariseth up forever and ever,—of chains of everlasting darkness,—of a dwelling with loathsome, disgusting, and fearful beings,—of an unceasing mingling of weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,—of a state in which utter annihilation seems a heavenly relief ; you are to consider these, if not literal descriptions of circumstances, at least figurative illustrations, which are wholly within the facts of literal suffering they were intended to display ;—else you make God to delight in giving false de-

scriptions of anguish and distress. Your only escape from this, is to say, these Scriptures are without authority. That surely cuts the knot; and it brings an end to all discussion of the subject. Whether it betters your own condition and prospects, I must leave it for yourselves to settle.

All these sorrows are before the man who is without Christ. They are the certain and declared issue of his chosen course, the assurance of his attainment of which is only to be unsettled by us, by undermining the whole authority of the divine revelation. They are the issue of his course, because he is without Christ. It was to deliver him from these wages of sin, by bearing them upon himself, that the Son of God came into the world in his likeness and nature. The death of the Lord Jesus, as an offering for sin, has made the everlasting death of the sinner wholly unnecessary. His transgressions, though a thick cloud, may be blotted out; his iniquities, though risen up like a mountain unto the heavens, may be all forgiven; his crimson stains may be made as white as snow, by his improvement of that blessed opportunity and opening for peace, which the finished atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ has provided. But his continued voluntary rejection of Christ as the Saviour, to whom the Gospel calls him; and his continued contempt of the Holy Spirit, who would graciously lead him to this Saviour, and to everlasting security in Him, hath no forgiveness, no hope of escape. There remaineth for him in this voluntary rebellion, no further sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour

the adversaries of God. And when in hell he lifts up his eyes, being in torments, the testimony will resound continually in his ears, "Thou hast destroyed thyself." The Saviour may then charge him, "In me was thy help."—"Ye would not come unto me, that ye might have life."—"O, that thou hadst hearkened unto me! then thy peace should have flowed down like a river; thine adversaries should have been found liars unto thee; thou shouldest have trodden upon their high places." The sinner rejecting the divine counsels of mercy, is eternally destroyed, and suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, because he has been, by his own choice and determination, without Christ. That is his certain portion forever there, because this has been his chosen condition here. Could he be brought out of this condition;—could he be brought to Jesus, washed, and clothed, and sanctified in Him, all this prospect would be changed immediately, and uninterrupted and eternal security would take its place. The Father would be pleased with him, as one with his beloved Son; and his sins and his iniquities would be remembered no more.

But his dangers are in the extreme improbabilities of this result,—improbabilities which are accumulating in numbers, and increasing in power, day by day. We grant, that could he be led to accept an offered Saviour in his heart, all would be well. But what is the likelihood that he will be led to do this? What are the rational elements of calculation in his behalf, that he will really ever fly to the bosom of Jesus, and thus, found in him, escape the just judgment of God? Are there any *opportunities* of mercy yet to be

granted to him, which he has not already enjoyed? Will there be any further means of salvation provided for him, which he has not hitherto possessed? Has not a descending Saviour, once for all, borne the penalty of his sins? Has not a rising Saviour, once for all, conquered for him the power of death? Has not an ascended Saviour, on His priestly throne, offered His glorious intercession? Has not an awakening Spirit touched the inward conscience of the sinner? Has not an enlightening Spirit thrown heavenly illumination everywhere around Him? Has not a convincing Spirit made him sometimes feel and mourn under the burden of his sin? Has not a persuading Spirit almost compelled him to be a Christian? Has not a Father of mercies stood waiting to receive this erring sheep, when folded by the Spirit in the Shepherd's bosom, he should be seen returning from the dreary wilderness of his unpardoned rebellion? And has not the man without Christ, gone through all these blessed opportunities, by which millions have been saved around him, to remain in his guilty condition, of his own will and determination, still without Christ? Now I ask, what more can be done for such a man? What probability is there, that a future effect shall be found from these opportunities of deliverance, which all past time has been unable to produce?

Are there any outward *privileges* or means to be bestowed upon him, of which he has been thus far deprived, that can make these great offered mercies more effectual in future? Has he not despised the volume of divine inspiration, refusing to

seek in it, for the hidden treasures of God's mercy and love? Has he not rejected the sacred ministry of the Gospel, filling his heart with thorns that may choke it; searing his conscience with indifference, that it may give no lodging-place to the truth of God; opening his mind with carelessness, that any intruding enemy might pluck from thence the heavenly seed; nurturing every rising shape of prejudice against the truth, and rejecting thus, with unyielding perseverance, all the counsels of God against himself? Has he not refused the voice of prayer; bending no knee in humble supplication, bringing no sincere and broken spirit to the throne of mercy; having not, because he would not ask? Has he not dwelt in the midst of very peculiar privileges, having ever before him, a door opened in heaven, and possessing every advantage which can be bestowed upon man, to lead him to the unfailing portion of God's redeemed? He has gone through all these thus far, without Christ. What likelihood is there, that they will exercise a future power which they have been unable to put forth in all these days of his rebellion, which have now gone by? What probability is there, that other, greater privileges will be granted to a man who, with such determination, has made these continually unavailing? The improved talent brings out the increased gift. The neglected talent insures condemnation and rejection as its certain result. How then can a man, whose history and character are, that he has neglected all his privileges past, ask or hope for increase of privileges in time to come?

Are there any *motives* to be urged upon him,

to which he has not been hitherto accustomed? Have not all the arguments, persuasions, and entreaties, which could be gathered from a Saviour's love,—a Father's mercy,—the Spirit's presence,—the worth and glory of a heavenly world,—the sorrows of a death without hope,—been united in their varied pleading with his soul, to lead him to the fountain of divine appointment? Have not all the facts and interests of three worlds been brought together, to urge him to make his calling and election sure? God has opened the heavens, and uncovered the destruction of hell, that He might persuade and compel the guilty man to think of the eternity to come. The joys of divine benevolence have crowned his days, and asked for an offering of heartfelt gratitude and praise. The warnings of divine correction have filled his soul with sorrow, and expostulated with his negligence of eternal things. The fleeting vanities of earth have passed from his embrace, and taught him that he hath no portion here. The opening grave has gathered in its bosom, multitudes of those whom he has loved, and has solemnly bid him to remember the necessity of an everlasting portion hereafter. All these instruments of influence, and motives to immediate concern and action for his soul, have been united in their operation upon his mind, for years. But they have been all in vain. He has remained throughout the whole of this agency of divine solicitation and mercy, still without Christ. What more can now be done to influence his rebellious mind, or to persuade him to find his life and hope in a Saviour's power? What likelihood is there,

that motives which have so long proved so completely unavailing, will in future exercise a power, which has thus far been altogether denied to them?

He has maintained his ground without Christ thus far. The improbabilities of his future escape from this condition are extreme. All that can be done for him has been already tried in vain. What can there be remaining, but the certain prospect of that banishment from the presence of God, and the glory of His power, which has been exhibited, as the necessary issue of his course? You are further to add, to all these improbabilities, the alarming fact, that his *heart grows harder*, and his conscience becomes more seared against the power of the truth, by every step in this continued rejection of opportunities, privileges, and motives, so adapted to arouse and rescue him. You see him in the early stages of his connection with the truth, restless, excited, unsatisfied,—perhaps angry with the power of the word,—gnashing upon the arrow which for a moment has pierced his side. You see him afterwards become habituated to the assaults of the truth, contented under its appeals, and peaceful amidst its alarming denunciations. But how sad and fatal is this change! The former state was the rustling rapids of the stream, just entering the walls of its confinement, and commencing its impetuous career. The latter is the calm, full, but more certainly fatal rushing of the torrent, when the rapids are passed, and the current rolls forward to the precipice in unresisted quietness. The condition of the man who is borne

upon the stream, was dangerous before. It has now become desperate. The man who saw him in his first condition, felt every drop of blood in his body quiver in intense sympathy. The man who sees him in this last condition, before he takes his final plunge, finds all sympathy to be stupified and destroyed by an overwhelming horror at the certainty of his fate. While the man without Christ is still restless and susceptible to excitement,—nay, conscious of anger under the power of the word, there remains for him the hope of possible escape. But, when unbelieving indifference has taken possession of his mind, his destruction becomes certain, his damnation sure. This indifference is the natural uniform result of long continued rejection of the truth; and it is to be taken into the account, as a certain element of calculation, when the dangers of the man without Christ are to be estimated by us.

And yet, even to this, you are to add the fact, that *God has limited the hour of His forbearance* with the rejecters of His grace. The fixed period is before Him, when He will proclaim of the man who is joined to his idols, “Let him alone;”—when the Spirit shall strive no more, and the descending dews and rains shall but hasten him as fuel for the fire;—when repentance shall be hidden from his eyes, and as he loved cursing, so it shall clothe him about as a garment;—when the heavens shall shut out his prayer, and the answer to his remorseful entreaties shall be, “I never knew you;—depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.” This is an awful condition. But it is assuredly before the man without Christ, as the necessary

result of his course. And it is but cruelty in the professed ministry of the word of God, to see him thus pressing forward with outspread canvas, inevitably to dash upon this rock, and not to lift up the voice like a trumpet, to warn him of his danger in the most solemn and awakening terms of appeal.

But you are still to add to this, that while the Holy Ghost will thus forsake him, *the Judge standeth at the door* for his condemnation. In the midst of all his calculations that to-morrow shall be as this day, and more abundant, the command may have already gone forth, "Cut him down; why cumbereth he the ground?—I have sworn in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest." And to-morrow his boastful tongue may be silent, his limbs enchained in death, his self-confiding heart have ceased to beat, and his soul, neglected, despised, sold under sin, be bound, unpardoned, to answer for his guilt, in the presence of an offended God. Then the solemn final issue is attained. The fruit of his procrastinating folly has been ripened. And the outer darkness from which he refused to flee, has become his dwelling-place forever.

These are the dangers of the man without Christ. They belong to him, simply because he is without Christ. The effect of their solemn consideration should be, to lead such instantly to cast away the chains which hang about them, and to give themselves no rest, until their souls are reconciled to God. The refuge which is opened for them in the Lord Jesus is a complete and sufficient one. The method of access to it, through

an affectionate, living faith, which believes Him and trusts in Him, is easy and open. The Holy Spirit waits to guide them to it, and to secure them in it. But all these provisions and instruments are vain, until, with sincere and anxious desires for salvation, they will lay hold of the provided strength, and embrace, with humility and joy, the hope which is set before them. Could one such soul be moved by these lines, now to flee with thankfulness to Jesus, as a refuge from the wrath to come, thanks would be given by many to God, that this effort to testify His truth has not been labour in vain.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GUILT.

IN our previous consideration of the important subject now before us, we have dwelt upon the unhappiness of the man without Christ, both in reference to his future prospects and his present condition, and upon the extreme dangers to which he is exposed in this condition. We must now reflect upon the *guilt* which necessarily appends itself to this state.

Guilt is the consequence of transgression. It is the just desert in man of the penalty which was denounced against transgression, and the exposure and subjection of man to this penalty. The wages of sin against God is everlasting death,—and the guilt of the sinner is his just exposure to this awful punishment of sin. Every sin constitutes man guilty before God, and brings him under His just condemnation. But some sins are exceedingly sinful, as committed against commandments peculiarly clear and undeniable, and in defiance of warnings and privileges most adapted to secure obedience. Nay, some sins are declared to be in their aggravation, so peculiarly and certainly unto death, that intercessory prayer in the sinner's behalf is prohibited, and forgiveness refused.

by God himself. There is a sin unto death;—there is a sin which hath no forgiveness. There are those for whom God will not be entreated with success.

We have now to speak of the guilt of the man who is without Christ. In this, I shall refer only to that guilt which is peculiar to this condition. Men are accustomed to contemplate sin as a succession of acts. They hardly imagine guilt to be attendant upon a state or condition of life. These acts of sin, they estimate almost exclusively by their influence upon society and surrounding men. The authority and honour of God, are hardly brought in as elements in this calculation and account. However rebellion may triumph against Him, or impiety may trample upon His will, or unbelief may treat His word of truth with derision or contempt;—if apparent integrity towards men, or a kindness of natural temper in his intercourse with men, still gilds and adorns the character of man in these relations, all the guiltiness of his relation to God is forgotten in the admiration which this aspect of his life may excite. But these aspects of human character are not especially before us now. We are not to accuse man of being a murderer, a drunkard, or a thief. We are not to charge him with oppression or fraud in his intercourse with his fellow-men. We willingly allow that he may be especially free from just exposure to every charge of this kind, so that he may stand on the eminence of his integrity and faithfulness, and look round upon an admiring world with the expostulation of the ancient Prophet, and with equal success,—“I have walked before you from

my childhood unto this day.—Behold, here I am ; witness against me ;—whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith ? and I will restore it to you.” We do not undervalue, still less despise, these aspects of the character of man. They have their worth, and they have their reward. But they are not acquired or exercised for God ; and they can therefore claim no reward from Him. Allowing, however, that man possesses them all, they do not touch the view of his character, or of his responsibility, which we are now considering. We here charge man simply with being without Christ,—and we speak of his guilt in this fact, and arising from this fact alone.

It is the guilt of this condition, and of the facts which flow out of this condition, of which we are to speak. When God hath sent His Son, to become His last Ambassador to the rebellious race of men ; to assume their nature, and to endure its sorrow in the tenderest sympathy ; to offer himself a sacrifice for sin ; to fulfil all righteousness in their behalf ; to open, in His own conquest over death, the way to life and immortality ;—and when this has been done, as the only way of salvation for the guilty, and of reconciliation to an offended Creator ; this man chooses to remain, without any personal interest in this work of divine mercy, and to cast entirely away from him, the blessings and benefits which it brings ; he is voluntarily without Christ.

But has he not the right to take this stand ? Allowing that it is a course of misery, and that

he runs the hazard of tremendous dangers; still, if he be willing to assume it, and to endure all this responsibility, has he not the right to do it? If he chooses to be damned, has any other one the authority to interfere? Who else is injured but himself? Will you call the state a guilty one, when he merely rejects proffered benefits, which either he does not value or desire; or in the existence of which he perhaps does not believe, though he might desire them? This is the argument of human pride. Thus men set their faces against the heavens, saying, "We are our own;—who is Lord over us?" But upon this very ground, the Bible meets them; and proclaims them in this condition to be guilty before God, and to come under the just judgment of His law.

In this condition, they are *voluntary rebels against the divine authority*. This is not a question of mere personal interest. The Creator has an undoubted right to the obedience and service of His creatures. God, who hath made all men for himself, and in whose hand their breath is, and whose are all their ways, is supremely entitled to the utmost of their powers and ability in the fulfilment of His commands. Shall man claim, to the exclusion of all his fellow-men, power over the machine which his skill has invented, or over the house which his hands have built; and shall surrounding men sustain and justify this claim, and pronounce the violation of it robbery and wrong; and shall God have no such right over the works of His hands? Shall He be robbed of the service of the creatures whom He has made; and shall there be no guilt in the denial of His authority and

right? Shall the ruler among men be counted just, and ruling in the fear of God, while he demands the obedience which is due from a subject; or shall the parent be acknowledged to be injured, while he is refused the honour which is his right from his child; and may not God be permitted to say, with equal right, "If I be a father, where is mine honour; and if I be a master, where is my fear?" If one single creature has the right to rebel against the divine authority, every other one must have the same right. If one race, or a portion of one race of beings, may remain in a condition of voluntary separation from the authority of God, certainly another may do so; and so may all. And heaven becomes desolate, and earth scoffs, and hell triumphs, and universal order is annihilated, and God, the mighty God, is despised by the work of His hands, and left alone to stand as the mere object of their contempt. Is this, then, a question of the mere interests of the creature? And will not all this argument apply to the man who is without Christ? It will and must, beyond all dispute. The acceptance or rejection of the salvation of the Gospel, is a question of divine authority. God has opened the way for the rebel's return, in reconciliation to himself; and then commands him to come back. When He bringeth His first begotten into the world, He saith, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him; let all the Angels of God worship Him. He that despiseth this Son, despiseth Him that sent Him. In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God. Upon whomsoever this stone shall

fall, it will grind him to powder.—Those, mine enemies, who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither, and slay them before me.” The man without Christ, is, therefore, a man in rebellion against God. Had no pardon been offered to him, and no ransom provided for him; though he would have been still a rebel, and still under condemnation, he might have been called an involuntary rebel. But now that there is a Christ, an anointed Mediator, in whom eternal life is fully secured, and whom God hath permitted and commanded all men everywhere to receive, the man without Christ is an unnecessary and a voluntary rebel. This is the point of his rebellion. Here, over a rejected and despised Saviour, he is at war with God. How absurd, then, becomes the plea of reciprocal kindness and integrity with his fellow-rebels! How vain the allegation, that they are in mutual amity, united in benevolent affection, and do each other no wrong! If this be true, can the fact have any other influence upon the point of his rebellion, than to increase its guilt? Does it not confess that he can be affectionate, and upright, and reverent, if he will; and that therefore, his continued refusal of all this to God the Saviour, to whom it is all supremely due, is yet more manifestly a voluntary and intentional robbery and wrong? These acts and attributes of imaginary excellence in him, even were they real, so far from tending to create a merit in him, or to diminish or excuse his guilt in the sight of God, actually increase the wickedness of his rebellion, and condemn him out of his own mouth. If he can love any thing, he

is just so much the more guilty for not loving God. It is thus that the very ploughing and the prayer of the wicked still remaining in their rebellion, become hateful and an abomination in the sight of God. And the more helpful wicked men are willing and able to be to each other, the more thoroughly inexcusable is their ingratitude and rebellion against God. The fixed point of this rebellion against the authority of God, is in man's refusal to accept and serve this appointed Saviour. There is the embodying of the divine authority, and there is the manifestation of human hostility;—man is without Christ. And he is in rebellion against God, because he is so. In no way can this breach be made up, but by the thankful and humble submission of man to this glorified Lord, according to God's commands. Every day that he remains in his present condition, all the increasing guilt of determined rebellion against the will of his Creator, is accumulating upon him, and hurrying him onward to everlasting woe.

The man without Christ is in this condition;—*a perverse rejecter of the amazing love of God.* He has been the object of a benevolence which has filled the heavens with astonishment. It is not necessary for us to enhance this love, which the Gospel exhibits and proclaims, by a comparison of it with the tenderness displayed in inferior gifts. We have a far higher standard. Angelic beings, who have always dwelt in the purity of the divine presence, and have known, and seen, and understood, all of the excellence of their Creator, which was communicable to the creature;

whose views and apprehensions of the divine benevolence in the joys of which they have had their permanent abode, must be exalted, deep, and clear, beyond all other knowledge ;—are displayed as adoring and admiring the manifold riches of divine grace, which the redemption of man has unfolded ; and as desiring to investigate the depths of a subject, every aspect of which is so overwhelming and grand. What higher view can be given of the love of God in the gift of His Son, than this ? The subject of the study of heaven, is the love of God to guilty man ; a love which passeth knowledge, the riches of which are unsearchable, and its extent past finding out. Of this love of God, the man without Christ has been the object. For him, the heavens have bowed their glory. For him, the Lord of life hath descended to the earth. For him, the Son of God hath become the Son of man ; and the possessor of a heavenly throne hath been made the victim of an earthly cross. For him, this mysterious traveller upon the earth, was humbled and bruised, has agonized and died, has triumphed and interceded. And when you ask the secret of all the amazing grandeur of his work ;—why purity is tempted, and innocence suffers, and kindness is despised, and majesty is crushed, and all the dignity and glory of Immanuel is covered with shame ;—you are brought to the habitation of this rebel without Christ, and told, it was all for him. It was all to redeem that guilty man from inevitable condemnation and death,—to save his perishing soul from an everlasting punishment in hell. Do you not ask at once, with incredulous amazement, Does he

know this fact? has he ever heard of this wonderful work of love for him? Yes; he has been assured of it all, a thousand times, by God himself. Does he not instantly spring to embrace it? Does he not weep with gratitude? Does he not shout in praise? Does he not summon every power of his soul to tell the love he feels, for love like this? O no! He sits unmoved. He scoffs at the intelligence. He perversely rejects it all. He smiles in scorn at the eagerness with which it is urged upon him. He has done all this for years. This bleeding messenger of love,—this pleading advocate of grace, has knocked at the door of his heart; has expostulated with his conscience; has entreated him, hung around him, and begged him to enjoy the rest which He had brought to him. But His amazing tenderness has been completely in vain. The man dwells there still, in his chosen habitation, willingly without Christ. Is this not guilt? Yes, heaven and earth unite to say, nothing else is guilt in comparison with it; and the damnation of such a man is just. If ingratitude be guilt, then in proportion as the object of the kindness is unworthy and without claim, and the giver has been injured, and the gifts are great and precious, and the bestowal is persevering and prolonged, does the guilt of the ingratitude become the greater. Now, all these facts are gathered around the man who is without Christ. They appertain to him in their highest possible degree. Is not his condition, then, a guilty one? Is he not guilty for remaining in it? Is he not increasingly guilty, every day that he abides in it still, amidst the means of knowl-

edge and conversion which are kept within his reach?

The man without Christ, to the extent of his power, *makes utterly vain, the whole work of the divine redemption.* The Holy Scriptures display this work, as in the great covenant of mercy, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost have united in it. They carry us back to the counsels of eternity, and show the wisdom which planned, and the love which proposed it, before the world began. They take us through the history of its accomplishment, in the fulness of the time, and show us how, in every step, the patient execution of the design was fulfilled. They lead us forward to an eternity to come, and bring out all that can be told to man, of the joys passing man's understanding, which God hath prepared for them that love Him. They display a kingdom provided, and a crown prepared, for all who accept this amazing work of mercy to guilty man. All this is the plan of divine redemption. It brings together, all things in one, in Christ. The man who is in Christ, possesses all this in Him. The man who is without Christ, makes all this void. To the extent of the influence which he can exercise, Christ hath died in vain. It is vain to say that all men, to whom these offers are made, do not thus reject them. It is no argument to diminish the guilt charged upon one man, that others avoid a following of his wicked course. His acts must be judged by their own principles, not by the possible counteracting of their influence by other power. And if every man should follow the path which he hath chosen, of what benefit to the race of sinners

for whom it was devised, would all this scheme of mercy be? Would not the grace of God be completely made of none effect? And is there no guilt in such a perversion and overthrow of this wonderful love of God to man? When wanton malice destroys some complicated and beautiful product of human ingenuity, or consumes in flames, the result of years of man's benevolent study for the benefit of his fellow-men; is there no guilt in such unnecessary, reckless overturning of the purposes and property of man? And how strange it is, that man shall see the guilt of every wrong inflicted upon himself, and yet deny the guilt of such far greater wrongs heaped upon a merciful and gracious God. The purpose of redemption is to make an end of sin, to arrest the sorrows of creation, to save the victims of condemnation, to make innumerable multitudes of beings eternally happy, to secure them in everlasting peace in heaven, and to bring the highest eternal glory to God, in the accomplishment of these ends. These great purposes all meet in Christ. The man who joyfully receives Him, is a worker together with Him, in their attainment. The man who is without Christ, is scattering where Jesus gathers, and overturning where Jesus builds. The whole issue and operation of his life, is the destruction of good. It is a mercy to creation, that his power is so limited and temporary. Give him an unrestrained and unlimited exercise of might, with the motives and principles which now constrain him, and you would bury the universe in ruins, trampled beneath the feet of his rebellion. And when he is brought to the final esti-

mate of his earthly career, it will be seen by himself, that he has spent his utmost strength and time, in destroying all the plans of God for the deliverance of a sinful world ; in heaping up iniquity and wretchedness for the sons of men ; and in peopling with outcast souls, the everlasting abodes of sorrow and death. Now, is there no guilt in this ? I ask again, what other guilt can be greater ? or what else is guilt at all, in comparison with such a course ?

While the man without Christ is in this condition, voluntarily a rebel against divine authority, a perverse rejecter of divine love, a destroyer of the whole scheme of divine redemption ; he is still further guilty, *in choosing a state of hostility against God, when it is wholly unnecessary*, and he may be instantly rescued from it. He has no advantages in his sin. He gains nothing by its commission. He has no comparative temptations to lead him to remain in it. It is completely unnecessary ; and it is persevered in, exclusively, as a matter of his own desire and choice. It is, therefore, his condemnation, that he loves darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. What can make him more guilty than his choice of a consciously guilty state, as the condition which he desires and loves—though every motive which might be conceived adapted to influence him, unites to urge him to flee from it ? Sin, rebellion against God, the abominable thing which God hates, is the thing which he loves and chooses, and to which he adheres with persevering determination. Of necessity, therefore, he shuts himself out from all excuse, and must stand

before God under the whole burden of his transgressions; and with the whole responsibility of the condition which they characterize, and out of which they flow. He must defend and make good his selected ground of open and persevering rebellion against the Most High, or he must be destroyed forever.

This is the condition of the man without Christ, and because he is without Christ. We have traced his course, as unconverted and unpardoned, through its misery, its danger, and its guilt. How serious and alarming is such a condition, all who have followed me must be able to discern. Thus wretched, thus guilty, thus condemned, thus destroyed, is every one who remains an alien from God, and a stranger to that cleansing blood of Jesus, by which alone, remission of sin is to be obtained. How wonderful is the delusion which persuades vain and guilty man, for this condition of barrenness and ruin, to sacrifice all that is desirable in the present life, and all that is worthy of hope in the life to come! What is there that seems attractive in it? What wages can it give? What promise does it offer? And why shall man submit to the delusion which would keep him spellbound under its influence, until the Comforter who would relieve his soul is driven far from him, and God finally refuses to be gracious unto him? Again would I repeat the urgent entreaty to every reader, fly to the hope which is set before you, and seek your refuge and your rest in the power and love of Jesus Christ the Lord.

CHAPTER XXV.

POSSIBLE EXCELLENCES.

IN pursuing our view of this condition of man, it seems desirable that we should consider with more precision, the facts and the state of mind which distinctly and precisely mark it. I have spoken of the misery, the danger, and the guilt which attend upon it. But these are not the only aspects under which it should be regarded. It is often attended with many apparent personal *excellences*;—many traits and attributes which seem to be most desirable in the character of man; and which are precious indeed, if they are sanctified by the Divine Spirit, and carried forward, as the attributes of a really Christian character. To represent the man without Christ, as necessarily, and always, the agent of manifest and open depravity; as having no trait which can adorn the human station, or dignify and exalt the character of man, would be manifestly unjust. This I have not attempted to do. It is equally unnecessary. We may concede to him all that he can rightly claim. We may form our estimate of his character, wholly by his own acknowledgments. We may give him full credit for every thing which is really his own. Neither the argument which we

hold with him, nor the cause of truth which we plead before him, require any extravagance or deception to make them perfectly distinct and clear. The ground which we occupy is entirely plain and demonstrable. The conclusions to which we are conducted, in connection with it, are wholly undeniable. We thus stand upon the rock of unshaken and eternal truth, while we faithfully describe and openly warn the ungodly. By the manifestation of the truth, we commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

We may therefore concede to the man without Christ, *a highly cultivated intellect*. Blinded as his understanding may be, to a spiritual discernment of the things which God reveals, he may be, by no means, an ignorant man. The natural powers of his mind may be highly elevated. The acquisitions which they have enabled him to make, may be varied and profound. His ability to be useful to his fellow-men is thus great. His actual usefulness in their earthly concerns, may be great also. His mental stores, gathered with care, arranged with order, brought out with the elegance of refinement and wisdom, may render him extensively attractive, instructive, and popular, in the society of men. But what has all this to do with a redeeming God? The man may still be an infidel, with regard to the very truth of the divine revelation itself. And all that glittering variety of intellectual attainment, may be shining in the wedded embraces of a scoffing spirit; like the magnificent brilliants which are employed, to decorate the base and hideous stock of a Hindoo

idol, or the jewels which adorn a harlot's brow. Even if this be not the fact, the wisdom of man gives no security against it. There is no sanctifying influence in mere intellectual power. The understanding of all mysteries, and all knowledge, separated from the transforming power of the love of God, by the Holy Ghost, leaves the man without Christ still to perish, with beings of far higher intelligence, in a similar condemnation. And though he may be a man of highly cultivated mind, he is still, as voluntarily without a Saviour, a man unconverted,—under condemnation,—having no hope, and without God in the world.

He may be a man of a *really serious temper*. It is not necessary to suppose him light, trifling, and profane. All this class of loose and careless impiety he may truly abhor, and utterly shun. His tendency of mind may lead him to estimate very highly, the importance of religion, and of divine worship, to the right ordering of a household, and the peaceful constraint of a community. He may see most clearly how certainly the contempt of the Holy Scriptures, the habitual violation of the Sabbath, and the neglect of the decencies of public worship, and of the claims of divine authority, break down the most important and abiding barriers against the inroads of human lawlessness and vice, and rive asunder the strongest securities of the lives and property of men. And, though he may secretly doubt the very inspiration of the Scriptures, and almost question whether there be a Deity, or no, still he may confess that man has seen no other book of morals or precepts like this, and that it would be a dark and dreadful day for

earth, which should blot out the power of the belief that there is a God who judgeth in the world, even though it were certainly nothing more than a fiction of man. This temper of mind will lead him to support and encourage the public worship of God; to give his countenance to all the institutions of the Gospel in the community; to uphold and sanction the power of religious restraint in the family; and even to make himself habitually familiar with the instructions which the Bible contains. But to what does all this amount, but the following out a naturally grave and quiet temper?—or the pursuit of the purposes of selfish interest?—or, if any thing beyond, the intentional bestowal of outward countenance upon that which is secretly disbelieved? And what is this last but mere hypocrisy? When this serious temper is sifted and examined at the last, the man is still without Christ. And if it be true, that there is salvation in no other name, and that he who believeth not in Him, must be damned; what possible prospect is there before the man in this condition, but everlasting destruction?

He may be *entirely upright*, in his outward, earthly intercourse with his fellow-men. He may pursue this course, not from a mere low desire of gain, but from an inward purpose of proud integrity, a real disgust at all which is mean, delusive, and fraudulent in the dealings of mankind. In the fine conception of a distinguished writer, “his eye, when turned on empty space, beams keen with honour.” It would require a stronger temptation than he has ever met, to induce him to enrich himself by frauds upon the ignorance, or

oppression upon the weakness of his fellow-men. You may fearlessly intrust to his care uncounted money; justly convinced, that you shall receive from him again, all that is your own. This is a most valuable and dignified attitude of character; when man not only shuns participation in those wholesale frauds, which scatter distress and ruin in the community around, but when he cannot be satisfied with any thing short of the fulfilment of the least requirements of justice and equity. And yet all may be mere worldly integrity, and have in it no principle of real religion. It does not in any degree, respect the great fact, that God hath redeemed, and will judge the world, by His own equal and glorified Son. This you are ready to acknowledge. But then you say, Is it not far better than professed religion without integrity? This we concede;—nay, still further allow, that there is no aspect of human character more disgusting and hateful than a fraudulent religionist; a man who assumes the profession and title of a follower of the Lord Jesus, and yet wounds Him in the world continually, by undeniable faithlessness in his contracts and his promises. But the consideration of this character, is not our present point. We are estimating the worth of integrity to men, without love to God; not of a professed love to God, which is manifestly false, because destitute of integrity to men. And may not this man be thus upright, and yet never have bent a knee in secret prayer,—nor have so much as thought, with desire, of the salvation which is offered in the blood of Jesus Christ the Lord? Is he not, therefore, a man without Christ? And is

he not necessarily exposed to all the proper results attendant upon this condition?—Even though, if the very secrets of his habitual conduct could be openly displayed, it should be really proved, that he had never voluntarily defrauded a human being of a single farthing?

He may be a man of *great domestic amiability*. There may be a suavity in his demeanour, a kindness in his manners,—nay, a real tenderness of affection towards those who are united to him in life, which shall render him the idol of the household. In every relation which he sustains in life, from that of a child to that of a parent, he may have justly won for himself, the affections of corresponding relatives, and the universal respect of those who have observed him. This is a most attractive and really valuable aspect of character. Those who are mourning under the corroding power of natural fretfulness of temper, either in themselves or others, best know how to value it, and are most ready to magnify its worth. And when this dove-like spirit is sanctified, and brought by the Spirit of God, under the dominion of heavenly grace, and of divine motives, it constitutes, perhaps, the most beautiful exhibition of which the character of man is susceptible. It seems like the very link which binds the human to the angelic station. But then we must not be deceived by false estimates of its worth. It is not piety. It is not a new nature. Its possessor may never have put on Christ; nor even in one single desire, or thought, have respected Him as an object of reverence, through the whole of life. Nay, all this blandness and domestic excellence may be

united with an utter disregard of religion ; sometimes with the most intense hatred for it. It is sometimes the fact, that the only subject which ever seems competent to rouse up the anger which is hidden beneath, and to turn the law of kindness habitually upon the lips, to words of bitterness and wrath, is the one blessed subject of redemption for the ungodly, through the blood of God's dear Son ; and the pressing upon the heart of the motives which this amazing love from God suggests. The attribute of which we speak, has its reward, and a very abundant reward, in the happiness which it brings to its possessor ; and in the approbation and kindness which it wins, as a constant tribute from others. But its possessor has never done any thing for God ; and he cannot be allowed to come with the Lord's servants, for the recompense which is given in His vineyard, when his life has been spent in planting strange slips in the vineyard of another. Unwashed in that precious fountain which Christ hath opened, and unbelieving in that glorious righteousness which Christ hath provided, he is still without Christ ; and if there be salvation in no other, he is still without salvation, and has neither part nor lot in any hope which extends beyond the grave.

He may be a man of *benevolent feelings towards his fellow-men*. His kindness of temper may extend entirely beyond the mere circle of his domestic scene. I do not now speak of mere sensibility to suffering ; though that is by no means to be undervalued. I honour the spirit that would weep over the agonies of the poor wounded bird, far more highly than the skilful indifference which

delights in its causeless destruction. I speak of actual efforts of kindness, in works of beneficence to mankind. There may be a liberality to the poor, the possible extent of which, though wholly separated from the love of God, the inspired Apostle estimates, as "giving all our goods" to feed them. There may be, in reference to the temporal wants and sorrows of mankind, a largeness of heart, like the sand upon the sea-shore, which makes unceasing provision and effort for their relief; endowing hospitals for the sick, asylums for the suffering, and schools for the young; never refusing bread to the hungry, or raiment to the naked. But do we undervalue all this? By no means. Do we place it in an antagonist position to true religion? Far from it. We only show that it may exist, separate from real religion;—though true piety can never subsist without these also as its fruits. All this benevolence of which I speak, has no respect to Christ, or His Gospel. Thousands of its suffering objects may still say, in reference to its possessors and agents, "No man cared for my soul." Infidelity may use it, as a chosen weapon against the Gospel. Absolute hostility to Christ may boast of its fruits, as the magicians of Pharaoh did of their miracles, as if they rendered divine interposition unnecessary and useless. It may scoff at the poor spirit which would lay aside all confidence in such works of righteousness which we have done, to find and embrace the offer of an undeserved salvation, merely in a revealed atonement for guilt, and in the declared obedience of an unseen Sav-

iour. Thus manifestly, may such a man be without Christ.

But while we freely concede to the man without Christ, all this,—the possible possession of intellectual cultivation, seriousness of temper, integrity in trust, domestic amiability, and general beneficence,—and assert that they do not affect his condition, in the relation in which we now view it ; we may go still farther, and allow the man without Christ to possess *certain states and exercises of mind, which are attendant upon a truly religious character*, but which are still separable from it. He may be thoroughly weaned in his desires from the present world, and dissatisfied with it as a portion. The extent of this feeling in unsanctified men, is often truly alarming. Their proud disgust with the faithlessness of other men, amounts to a hatred of mankind. Their weariness with the disappointments of the human condition, drives them to desire the dark relief of suicide. They loathe the world in which they dwell. None others can speak in stronger terms, or with more sincerity, of its thorough emptiness, and worthlessness, as a portion for the affections of man. But hatred of the world is not love for God ;—though love of the world is enmity against Him. The very things of the world, for which the man without Christ hates it—its disappointments and its trials,—are the seeds of the peaceable fruits of righteousness to the servants of God. The things in it which he loves, the prosperity of a course of sin, are those which the servants of God most fear ; and against the power of which they watch the most earnestly. Yet this weariness

ness of earth in the human mind is too often mistaken for a desire for heaven. In long-continued affliction and suffering, it is a dangerous temptation to self-deceit. There may be no love for Christ, no gratitude for redemption, no joy in communion with God, no delight in prayer, no longing for holiness, no groaning under the burden of secret sin, no meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light ;—and yet there may be a dissatisfaction with the gains and giddiness of earth, a voluntary alienation of mind from all the objects of mere earthly pursuit, which the possessor may fondly hope has been given him from above. But the children of God are not wearied with life ; nor rebellious under His appointments in it ; nor complaining of the lot which He has cast for them in it. If they find such a tendency in themselves, they uniformly check and renounce it. They cannot be deluded into an encouragement of it, as if it were desirable, or a duty. They desire and endeavour, in whatsoever state they are, therewith to be content. They strive to do all things which are required of them, through Christ, who strengtheneth them. This is their duty and their desire. Man may have all of mere earthly dissatisfaction, therefore, and still be without Christ.

The man without Christ may have much awakened feeling in connection with the interests of his soul, and a frequent, deep conviction of his sin. The solemn testimonies of the word of God may often arrest his thoughts, and fasten themselves upon his conscience. The majestic voice of the divine law may sound an alarm throughout

his soul, and arouse, with an irresistible power, every dormant feeling, in anxiety for himself. The facts of his guilt in the sight of God, may shine out in his terror-stricken memory, as if written with the lightning's glare. Abhorrent as may be the consciousness and the confession of his guilt, he may as readily deny or forget his very being, as the degradation of character which is made so apparent to his view. This conviction may be permanent, powerful, always present, and yet the man, though he feels himself to be a sinner, still be voluntarily without Christ. There is a manifest line which separates his condition in its highest attainments, from a state of acceptance, hope, and peace with God. At that dividing line, the converted heart yields to the divine power,—feels a godly sorrow for the sin which is perceived,—looks with an humble faith to the glorious Saviour who is there revealed,—puts on Christ, in a simple affectionate choice of Him as a portion, and dependance upon Him as an Almighty Lord,—is created anew by the Holy Ghost after His image, and becomes a new creature in Him. The man who is in Christ, has crossed that line of spiritual experience, and travels onward in the land which God has given him, to an endless rest. The Holy Spirit brought him to that line, in a real conviction of his sin. There, the question which is proposed by God, and answered by man, is, “Will you now gratefully receive and follow the Blessed Lord, whom you have so long rejected?” His glad reply was, “When thou saidst, seek ye my face; my heart said, thy face, Lord, will I seek.” But the man

without Christ may be brought up to that line repeatedly, under the awakened conviction of his conscience to his sin. There may seem nothing for him to do, but gladly to bow to the Saviour, who is there presented to him. No apparent reason can be suggested why he does not avail himself of a privilege so important to him. Deep surrounding anxiety may be felt by others, that he should not cast away from him, the hope of eternal life. And yet he may perversely refuse the Saviour's voice, and go back, with increased hardness of heart, to a state of voluntary unbelief and sin. He is far from being unawakened, or indifferent, or unconvinced. He is not far from the kingdom of God. But he is still without Christ. He has now chosen to cast His cords from him. You may trace him back, sometimes to absolute impiety and scoffing;—sometimes to seek oblivion in intemperance and profligacy;—and sometimes to work out a salvation for himself, by the vain sufferings and services of superstition. But though he has deep convictions of sin, he is without Christ. And if it be true, that they only have life, who come to Christ, and receive Him; it must be equally true, that he is necessarily without life, for he will not come. He hath no hope, and is without God in the world.

I have thus endeavored to trace certain attributes of character which the man without Christ may have. They are attributes which, in other connection, would be most valuable to the well-being of man, and to the Lord's glory. But they cannot, in themselves, alter the hopeless condition in which he stands,—a condition from which a

real spiritual union with Christ can alone rescue him. Amidst all these advantages, because he still rejects the offered Saviour, his condition is comfortless, and his soul is without hope. The Saviour is driven from his heart. His own imaginary excellence and attainments in virtue, are made the very reason of his refusal of the salvation which Jesus offers. And he lives and dies in the determination to answer for, and justify himself. If he cannot do this, his soul is lost.

O that men would think of the hazard which they thus assume, and cease from their own vain works, as any foundation for future hope, and cast themselves in faith upon Him who is able to sustain them! May the Gracious Lord mercifully bless these thoughts to those who read them, as an instrument of awakening them from all self-confidence, and of leading them in a real guidance to Christ.

CHAPTER XXVI.

NECESSARY DEFICIENCIES.

WE have already considered some of the attributes and states of mind and character, which a man without Christ may possess, which are in themselves highly attractive, and in many respects valuable. I have no disposition to detract in the least degree from the worth or beauty of these traits. But I think it has been clearly proved, that he may possess all these, and still be without Christ, and therefore, if there be hope and salvation in no other, still without hope. But the full description of his state is by no means finished, until we have also considered the attributes in which he is *necessarily deficient*, as well as those which he may really possess. This is the purpose now before us.

There are certain facts which are peculiar to the condition of the man who is in Christ, and which the man who is without Christ cannot have, as marks appertaining to his character. I am aware of the extreme delicacy, and of the vast importance and responsibility, of this delineation of spiritual character. I desire to rest upon the promises and guidance of the Divine Spirit, both to lead my own mind into truth in connection

with this subject, and to make that truth impressive and effectual in the minds of others.

I think it clear, that the man who voluntarily remains without Christ, cannot have *a real conviction of his guilt in rejecting the Gospel from his heart*. The Saviour teaches us what is the convincing work of the Holy Spirit. "When the Comforter is come, he shall reprove the world of sin, because they believe not in me." All true conviction of sin is the work of the Holy Spirit. When He awakens and convinces the mind that He leads to a knowledge and experience of the truth, He gives this peculiar view of the sinfulness of man. He makes him to feel the guiltiness of his life arising from this fact. Man under His influence, beholds himself a sinner, chiefly in his rejection of the saving power and authority of the Gospel. The man without Christ may have a conviction of sin. Esau had such a conviction, when he uttered his exceeding bitter cry for the blessing which he had lost. Judas had such a conviction when he exclaimed, "I have betrayed the innocent blood." Simon Magus had such a conviction, though he was still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. St. Paul declares such a conviction to be a sorrow of the world which worketh death. Such a conviction rests wholly upon the outward acts of life;—upon manifest violations of divine commands, in the external conduct of man. It arises from a dread of the condemnation and loss to which such transgressions must lead. It is wholly selfish in its character and operation;—having no other view of sin than that which is connected with man's

own interest. The man who is led as a penitent sinner to Christ feels all this guilt of his outward conduct. But he feels much more beyond this. He sees the guilt of his condition as a voluntary rejecter of divine grace;—the guilt of his state of mind, as an unbeliever in the Son of God;—the guilt of his secret neglect and disregard of Christ as a Divine Saviour. He feels the condemnation for his past life to be, not only, that in ten thousand things he has manifestly offended against the law of God, but also, and above this, that he has loved the darkness of his sinful state; and that he has ungratefully refused the offered light and love of God the Saviour. He is thus convinced of sin, because he has not believed in the only-begotten Son of God. The man without Christ has no such secret view of guilt. He feels it rather a strange proceeding, and a hard measure, that this should be spoken of as guilt at all. He will confess himself a sinner;—but the rebellion of his soul, in long silently rejecting God's dear Son from His rightful control over it, he does not feel or understand. He cannot truly say, My chief view of guilt within myself, is in the fact, that I have so long ungratefully neglected a Divine Saviour:—in this I see the exceeding sinfulness of sin. But no other conviction of sin will lead the soul to Christ. Conviction of sin can only lead, in any instance, to the renunciation of that which is felt in it to be the sin. Real faith in Christ can never grow but from the conviction of the extreme guilt of unbelief. In this all-important state of mind, and view of himself, the man without Christ,

whatever he may have, is always deficient. He has no real conviction of his sin.

The man without Christ cannot have *a real sorrow for sin*. We are taught by the Apostle, that there is more than one kind of sorrow for sin. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation. The sorrow of the world worketh death." They are both sorrow. But their issues and results are everlastingly opposite. The man without Christ is often sorry for his sin. If he remain finally without Christ, he will be everlastingly sorry for sin. The abode of future punishment for sin, is the abode of weeping and wailing forever. But this is a sorrow which worketh death. It arises from an experience of the present results of sin, and from a fear of its future consequences. It is a sorrow completely selfish, without the least regard to the honour or government of God, as in any degree concerned in man's transgression. But a true godly sorrow for sin springs from a sense of guilt,—not from an experience or fear of punishment. It has a regard to the glory and the goodness of God, and not to the mere effects of sin upon the sinner himself. It is therefore a permanent principle in the heart of man, even when sin has been forgiven, and punishment has been withdrawn forever. Such a sorrow, which is the only availing sorrow for sin, the man without Christ can never have. He sees no guilt in his refusal of a Saviour's kindness, or in his rejection of the spiritual power of His revelation. He can therefore have no mourning connected with his conduct towards Him. Go to him in his secret hours of grief,—if there be a time when the silent

tear falls from his eye, or the sleepless hour becomes the index of an anxious mind,—and should he reveal the real cause of his mourning, it is not his neglect of God, his ingratitude to Christ, his resistance of the Spirit. These facts do not secretly rise before him, as reasons for inward grief. If he mourn at all for sin, it is only for that which he believes to be sin, in the manifest transgressions of relative duty of which he has been guilty. Far more frequently, his sorrow has no connection with his sins; but arises from the unwelcome facts and circumstances which he perceives in his condition. Whatever may be his apparent excellences of personal character, or the promising aspects of his state of mind; this true sorrow for sin, the man without Christ never possesses, nor is able adequately to understand.

The man without Christ can have no *real love for the will, the service, or the worship of the Saviour of men*. In how many instances and passages in the Holy Scriptures, love to Christ is made the discriminating test of character to His disciples, I hardly need to remind you. “He that loveth me, keepeth my commandments.”—“He that loveth, is born of God.”—“He that loveth, fulfilleth the law.”—“He that loveth not, knoweth not God.”—“I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.” These are some of the divine testimonies upon this subject. To the man in Christ, the Saviour’s service is perfect freedom. He delights to do His will. He grieves if he cannot do it. He loves His worship. To be a door-keeper in His house, is in his estimation a higher privilege, and a more just object of desire, than to be the

possessor and ruler of the tents of ungodliness. Involuntary neglect and forgetfulness of the Redeemer in his heart, gives him unfeigned grief. Coldness of affection towards Him is a source of real sorrow and humiliation. He can truly say, that he has no pleasures on earth to be compared with the joys of a Saviour's service, and the salvation which he has received from Him. This is a state of mind which the man without Christ can never have. Religious subjects may often occur to his thoughts, as involving a very serious and important duty. He may, perhaps, sometimes consider and realize in some degree, the value of the benefits which are to be derived from the favour of God. But he has no conception of enjoyment, privilege, pleasure, delight, in an obedient following of Christ. He is not attracted to His service, by any such feelings or views. The Son of God is no object of personal affection to him. To labour for Him, to be spent in His service, to be able to promote His glory, seems to be no important end of life in his view. He is not conscious of any feeling that he can call love for Christ, or a desire for His service, as in itself a privilege. However excellent his character may appear in other respects, in the view of man; he is in this, wholly and necessarily destitute of a proper state of mind towards the great Saviour and Friend of perishing sinners.

The man without Christ, can have *no habit of cordial prayer*. Prayer is the utterance and expression of actual wants, in supplication to God; and not the habitual utterance of solemn words alone. The man without Christ may be in the

latter sense, a man of prayer. The world is full of such. He may keep all the canonical hours, go through a daily liturgy, fast twice in the week, and, like the prophets of Baal, make the air resound with his vain cries, and torment himself with sufferings equally vain. But all this is not prayer. There will not be a single acceptable offering of supplication in it. Saul of Tarsus thus prayed, according to the strictest sect of his religion, from his youth up. But when the hour of his conversion came, one of the leading evidences which the Lord announces of his new state of mind is, "Behold, he prayeth." Every man who has been brought to Christ, has experience of this. His vain oblations of form have yielded to the sincere expression of new desires, with which his heart is now filled. He has ceased to say or repeat his prayers merely; and he now prays with the heart and in the spirit,—not because it is his duty to pray, but because he feels his need, and knows that the power of God alone is able to supply it. His experience and habit now are, new and cordial supplication to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort. The man without Christ has no such habit. He will not call always upon God. He knows not how to pray. Of all the privileges and joys which come from acceptable prayer, he is destitute and ignorant. To a great extent, he will generally neglect even the serious observance of the form of prayer. Of the spirit of prayer, he knows nothing. In a simple, cordial reliance upon the name of Jesus, with a deep feeling of his own wants, he asks nothing.

He is without Christ,—and in this condition, he is habitually a prayerless man.

The man without Christ has *no feeling of confidence in God*. Trust in God is a peculiar characteristic of a filial relation to Him. The natural feeling of the heart towards God, is dread and apprehension. He may be feared by man in this state. He may be in an outward manner revered: But he cannot be loved, or confided in. The sinner is happier when he forgets Him, than when he thinks of Him. The more completely he can pass his life without God, and without a reference to God, the more quiet is his mind, and the more prosperous is his condition. Nothing more disturbs his peace, or breaks up the harmony of his spirit, than to have God brought near to him in the power of His providence, or in the piercing truth of His word. The man without Christ never gains this confidence in God, of which I speak,—in the state of mind in God towards himself,—in the care of God over him,—in God's acceptance of him,—in God's kind remembrance of him, until he is led to accept of divine reconciliation in Christ, and in Him to be reconciled himself to God. Then he becomes one with God in Christ; and his feelings are affectionate dependance and trust in Him, as a Father, a Benefactor, and a Friend. The value and importance of this feeling I need not here stop to consider. It lies at the foundation of all the real comfort of human life. But while man is without Christ, he cannot have this state of mind. He is a stranger to God. He feels himself to be so;—afraid of His judgments, alarmed

at His approach, and unwilling to trust himself to Him. From this cause, when conscious sin presses upon him he has no peace. When sufferings and distresses encompass him, he has no refuge. When earthly friends and hopes fail him, he has no compensating recourse to One more permanent and mightier than they.

The man without Christ has *no clear and consoling hope for an eternal world*. He may not believe that he shall be lost for eternity ;—because he is either deluded with the belief that no one will be lost, or else is not sufficiently alive to the subject, to consider the future prospects or likelihoods of any. It would be a happy thing for him, were he really awakened to feel and understand the danger of his soul. His unbelief or indifference surely cannot be called hope. Hope implies an object of desire and thought, and the exercise of desire and thought upon it. His state of mind produces neither of these, in connection with eternity. He may be thoroughly disgusted with the present world. But his antidote to this, the remedy which he would secretly propose and desire, would not be an exchange for heaven, but a remodelling of earth under his own direction. Take away the objectionable things in his earthly condition, and he would cheerfully agree to remain in it forever. He has no real hope of any thing better. Yet how many mistake the calmness of indifference and unbelief in regard to a future world, for hope. No two things can be more unlike in fact. Take an affectionate son or husband from our happy land to China, for a season of years, with the certain

prospect of a future return to the collected objects of his affection at home. He is upheld by hope of this return in all the labours and deprivations of his absence. But he is surrounded by multitudes, who are perfectly indifferent to his native land,—perhaps incredulous of the real existence of such a land. How very different is the joy of his hope, from the calmness of their incredulity and unconcern! Hope is positive, actual, and gives occupation to the thoughts, desires, and plans. This is the hope of the man who is in Christ. He is not dissatisfied with his present life. His mind is daily grateful and happy towards God, who here loadeth him with benefits. But God has provided far better things for him; and in looking forward to them, he rejoices in hope of the glory of God. The man without Christ has no such hope. The most he can ever profess in regard to an everlasting world to come, is an unbelief that he shall be lost. Any clear, consoling assurance, that he shall certainly be saved, founded upon reasons which have satisfied his investigation, and meet his demands and judgment, he has never had. This is an attribute which cannot appertain to his condition. All hope for man in an eternal world is connected indissolubly with Christ, who alone has brought life and immortality to light. There is salvation in no other. And the man who is without Christ, is of necessity, a man without hope.

The man without Christ has *no anxious concern for the souls of his fellow-men*. The doubts which he has of the absolute need of a Saviour for himself, are equally operative in reference to the

spiritual interests of others. He does not believe them to be in a lost condition. He cannot feel any mourning or sorrow for their state; or any anxious desire for their salvation; or any willingness to exert himself, or to deny himself in any way, that this salvation may be promoted. If he is ready to contribute of his money for the spreading of the Gospel, it is with some other view, than a real belief of the danger of those who are destitute of its blessings. His beneficence habitually limits itself to the temporal wants of men, because they are the only wants of which he is conscious, or by the suffering of which he feels disturbed. If in any way, he is led to unite in efforts for the relief of the spiritual suffering of men; he is ready, even then, to make the need of those immediately connected with him, the reason for rejecting all concern for any persons beyond these limits. Now it is almost needless to speak of the variance of this mind, from the mind which was in Christ. He who came from heaven to earth to save the sinner's soul, and cheerfully endured the extreme of his earthly sorrows, that He might effectually relieve his spiritual sufferings and wants has given an example so different from this, that a child must see the contrast. The man who is in Christ, has the mind which was in Christ. He feels, and prays, and labours for the salvation of the souls of his fellow-men. He earnestly desires their deliverance from the power of sin, and their acceptance of Christ, as their hope of glory. But he learns this lesson only at a Saviour's feet, and from a Saviour's Spirit. It is Christ alone who is able to impart the gift.

And while man is without Christ, he is necessarily wholly destitute of it.

The man who is without Christ, *does nothing with the honour of Christ as the motive of his actions.* The Glorious Saviour is the centre, around whom the actions of a real Christian are ever revolving. Whatsoever he does, his desire is to do it unto the Lord, and not unto men;—not as a man-pleaser, but doing the will of God from his heart. The man without Christ, has no such view in any of his acts. Neither his seriousness, nor his integrity, nor his amiableness, nor his beneficence, are for the Lord's sake, or designed for the Lord's honour. This fact constitutes an immense difference between any two acts of the two men described, which may be alike in every other particular. The one acts for Christ; the other acts for himself, or for other men. The one, however he may fail of human approbation, has the entire favour and acceptance of his Lord. The other, if men do not honour and repay him, has lost the whole result of his labour in any recompense for himself. This distinction between them can only be altered, by a change in the condition of the man without Christ. He must put on Christ, and become one with Him, before he can make it the purpose of his heart, to live and labour for His glory.

These are some of the attributes which it is perfectly manifest, a man without Christ cannot have. They will mark the wants of his character and his state, with sufficient accuracy. It is not necessary to enlarge upon them further. They

are commended in the fear of God, and the humble desire to be useful to my fellow-men, to the solemn consideration of my readers. May God graciously grant, that His word shall not return to Him void.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SOLEMN ANTICIPATIONS.

HAVING gone through this extensive view of the man without Christ, considered in the unhappiness, danger, and guilt of his condition ; it becomes us, in conclusion, to glance for a moment at the issue of his course. There is a solemn hour before him of separation from earth, and of trial before God. He may trust in his vain speculations, while the day of evil is postponed. He may bury his convictions of want in pressing occupations, while occupation may be pursued. He may riot in his rebellion, while an avenging God seems to stand afar off. But in the hour when he is compelled to yield up his spirit, to be judged by God who gave it, the fears of his awakened conscience will rarely be suppressed. Then he will be unable to conceal from himself, his actual condition. The awful dangers which encompass him will be acknowledged. And he will stand out as he is, to perceive, and to display, the real character and tendency of the principles and course which he has adopted, in a death-bed without Christ. There is an overwhelming majesty in the near approach of God,—so holy, so mighty,—which causes the unconverted soul to sink in despera-

tion. The heart of guilty man cannot brave out the terrors of that approach. He feels his separation from that Glorious Being, and his misery, his insignificance, and his guilt while thus separated. He trembles while reflecting upon himself. He feels that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God. There is then no room for flattery, and no covering for truth. The awakened conscience testifies;—and appetite, and indulgence, and worldly lusts, have lost all their power to repel the charge, or to alleviate the pain. The sinner will cry out in the anguish of his soul, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” What expressions of sorrow and remorse does the approach of death often extort from the guilty man, in a review of his abused and wasted life! How earnestly does he wish that he might but have his time again; a single further opportunity of knowing and doing the will of God! Deep anguish agitates his soul. The midnight hour has come. The voice of the bridegroom standing at the door, is heard. But he is entirely without a readiness to meet Him; and trembles at the prospect of beholding his offended God, face to face. Lamentations without consolation, make up the whole experience of his soul. Every view of that which is passed, and of that which is to come, fills him with distress. Perhaps his excessive pride may, in a degree, conceal the wants and miseries of his soul. He may attempt to maintain the appearance of an entire indifference, which shall be above every acknowledgment of the deep emotions of his awakened spirit. He may profess full dependance in his own

integrity, and go forward to the judgment-seat, avowing his own innocence, and refusing all acknowledgments of guilt. Perhaps he may be allowed ignorantly to slide into an everlasting world, while deluding friends around combine to conceal the awful fact. Earthly trifles may be presented to his view, to divert him from a possible thought of the eternity which is before him. The glad tidings of the Gospel may be shut out, because they will make him anxious and gloomy. Men and devils are conspiring to destroy a soul that Christ has purchased, and would gladly save. But even here, the revelation of the vengeance of God upon his guilt, is but for a little postponed. Soon he will awake to discover the real wretchedness of his condition; and in eternal rage and anguish, utter forth his useless imprecations upon his own folly, in being thus deluded, and the enormity of their guilt, in combining to deceive him. But even these temporary delusions, are exceptions in the history of man. The sinner's death is habitually a violent tearing of him from a world beloved,—an awful avulsion! He clings to every hope of life, like a drowning man. He cannot bear to die. Hell is stirred up to meet him at his coming. Go, grasp a man, and drag him to the mouth of a heated furnace, and attempt with force to plunge him into the flames! Take him to the giddy height of a precipice, and try to throw him headlong down!—with what desperate vehemence does he shrink back from a certain ruin! Thus is the sinner driven away in his wickedness;—a resistless force constrains him. He dare not go on,—he cannot stop. His sins are all lying

upon him. He is unpardoned, pressed down with an intolerable load. The nearer he approaches to the presence of God, the more he hates Him, and the more anxiously he labours to avoid Him. What wretchedness can be greater! What suffering more insupportable! It is all because he is without Christ. An accepted, trusted Saviour, would have removed all this load, and filled him with perfect and eternal peace. But he has lived, and he dies, without Him; and his soul is far off from peace.

But he has another anticipation still. He must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Dragged from every pleasurable scene and possession, he has nothing there but despair and anguish. The indignation of Jehovah will consume him as stubble in the fire. He may call in vain, upon rocks and mountains, to hide him from the face of God and the wrath of the Lamb. Conscious of his utter inability to stand in that fearful day, he would gladly shrink into annihilation, in the prospect of its solemn retributions upon his guilty soul. But God cannot be mocked. They who have sowed to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. The sinner can look upon that crucified One, whom he heedlessly despised and trampled upon, only with the most overwhelming fear and aversion. He would gladly avoid Him, and fly from Him if he could. He would delight to overturn His power, to destroy His right to judge, and to break up the authority, before which he trembles in dismay. He sinks in the prospect of meeting Him, in unutterable despair. He has no claim which will stand the test of God's examination;

no garment of righteousness, in which he may wrap himself; no argument to plead against the sentence of condemnation from his Judge. His own conscience confesses the justice of the divine determination. His mouth is speechless from all excuse. And God is proclaimed righteous in His judgment upon the ungodly. It is a judgment seat, with Christ upon the throne; but without Christ in the sinner's soul. O, could he there have this righteous Advocate with God, all would be well. His crimson sins would be forgiven, and his guilty soul rejoice in the peace of God. But he is without Christ;—this he has chosen as his portion, and he now reaps the harvest he has sown. He is condemned forever. There is now a final separation, and another solemn anticipation. He is to be without Christ forever. Banished from God, and from the fellowship of the redeemed, he is driven into endless woe. The result of his choice is now unchangeable. Eternity will but continue unceasingly to reveal the consequences of his folly. Consigned to an eternal rebellion, there is an endless punishment for an endless iniquity. He will never be brought to repentance. Though suffering forever for sin, he will have no true sorrow for it. He will mourn for his misery, not for his guilt. He will hate God forever, more and more; but he will never be grieved that he has sinned against Him. The presence of Jesus, gives all the peace which eternity can bring to man. He goes from the throne of Jesus, cast out from His presence forever. The compassion of God shines upon him no more. He looks around upon others, without

comfort. He is alone in the midst of a multitude. Without sympathy or support, he sinks into the abyss of eternal sorrow and despair. There is before him no ray of hope. He lies under the everlasting condemnation and curse of an avenging God. Without the possible attainment of relief, he has this at the Lord's hands, that he lies down in sorrow. It is an eternity of darkness;—an eternity without Christ. A fearful, awful doom! O, may every reader think of it, and flee from it,—AN ETERNITY WITHOUT CHRIST!

FINIS.



